

ANNOUNCER: FUNDING FOR
"COUNTRY MUSIC" WAS PROVIDED

BY THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS

OF THE BETTER ANGELS SOCIETY:

THE BLAVATNIK FAMILY FOUNDATION,
THE SCHWARTZ/REISMAN FOUNDATION,
THE PFEIL FOUNDATION,

DIANE AND HAL BRIERLEY,

JOHN AND CATHERINE DEBS,

THE FULLERTON FAMILY
CHARITABLE FUND,

BY THE PERRY AND DONNA
GOLKIN FAMILY FOUNDATION,

JAY ALIX AND UNA JACKMAN,

MERCEDES T. BASS,

AND FRED AND DONNA SEIGEL

AND BY THESE ADDITIONAL MEMBERS.

[BOB WILLIS AND HIS TEXAS
PLAYBOYS' "NEW SAN ANTONIO
ROSE" PLAYING]

WILLIS:
OH, TEAR IT DOWN, MR. MAN.

TEAR IT DOWN NOW.

MAJOR FUNDING WAS PROVIDED
BY: THE ANNENBERG FOUNDATION;

BY THE ARTHUR VINING DAVIS
FOUNDATIONS,

DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING
AMERICA'S FUTURE

THROUGH EDUCATION;

BY BELMONT UNIVERSITY,
WHERE STUDENTS CAN STUDY

MUSIC AND MUSIC BUSINESS
IN THE HEART OF MUSIC CITY;

BY THE SOUNDTRACK OF AMERICA--
MADE IN TENNESSEE--

TRAVEL INFORMATION
AT TNVACATION.COM;

BY THE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT
OF NASHVILLE

AND DAVIDSON COUNTY;

BY ROSALIND P. WALTER;

BY THE CORPORATION
FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING;

AND BY VIEWERS LIKE YOU.

THANK YOU.

â HEADING DOWN SOUTH
TO THE LAND OF THE PINE â

â THUMBING MY WAY INTO
NORTH CAROLINE â

â STARING UP THE ROAD,
PRAY TO GOD I SEE HEADLIGHTS â

â SO, ROCK ME, MAMA,
LIKE A WAGON WHEEL â

â ROCK ME, MAMA,
ANY WAY YOU FEEL â

â HEY, MAMA, ROCK ME

[CHEERING AND APPLAUSE]

â

â

MAVIS STAPLES: â LET US PAUSE
IN LIFE'S PLEASURES â

â AND COUNT ITS MANY TEARS

â WHILE WE ALL SUP SORROW
WITH THE POOR â

WOMAN: WELL, "HARD TIMES,"

A SONG LIKE THAT HAS A MESSAGE.

POVERTY IS VERY REAL
AND HARD TIMES ARE

JUST AROUND THE CORNER
FOR A LOT OF PEOPLE.

FOR ME, THE SAD SONGS
ARE THE BEST

BECAUSE THEY MAKE YOU
FEEL BETTER BECAUSE, SOMEHOW,
THEY CONNECT YOU TO THE WORLD,
THE FACT THAT WE'RE MAYBE
ALL IN THE SAME BOAT.

STAPLES: "OH, HARD TIMES
COME AGAIN NO MORE"

" 'TIS THE SONG,
THE SIGH OF THE WEARY "

" HARD TIMES, HARD TIMES,
COME AGAIN NO MORE "

" MANY DAYS YOU HAVE LINGERED
AROUND MY CABIN DOOR "

" OH, HARD TIMES,
COME AGAIN NO MORE "

FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT: MY FRIENDS,
I'VE TALKED WITH FAMILIES

WHO HAD LOST THEIR WHEAT CROP,
LOST THEIR CORN CROP,

LOST THEIR LIVESTOCK,
YET NO CRACKED EARTH,

NO BLISTERING SUN,
NO BURNING WIND

ARE A PERMANENT MATCH FOR
THE INDOMITABLE AMERICAN FARMERS

AND THEIR WIVES AND CHILDREN,

WHO HAVE CARRIED ON
THROUGH DESPERATE DAYS

AND INSPIRE US WITH
THEIR SELF-RELIANCE,

THEIR TENACITY,
AND THEIR COURAGE.

IT WAS THEIR FATHER'S TASK

TO MAKE HOMES.

IT IS THEIR TASK
TO KEEP THESE HOMES.

AND IT IS OUR TASK
TO HELP THEM WIN THEIR FIGHT.

STAPLES: " WHILE WE SEEK
MIRTH AND BEAUTY "

" AND MUSIC LIGHT AND GAY

" THERE ARE FRAIL FORMS
FAINTING AT THE DOOR "

" THOUGH THEIR...

NARRATOR: BY 1933,
THE WORST ECONOMIC CRISIS

IN UNITED STATES HISTORY,
THE GREAT DEPRESSION,

HAD ENTERED ITS FOURTH
DEVASTATING YEAR.

NEARLY 13 MILLION WORKERS
HAD LOST THEIR JOBS,

AND ONE OUT OF EVERY 4
FARM FAMILIES

HAD LOST THEIR LAND
AND THEIR HOMES.

BETWEEN 1933 AND 1945, NEARLY
EVERY ASPECT OF AMERICAN LIFE

WOULD BE STRAINED AND UPROOTED.

THE DEPRESSION
WOULD BE FOLLOWED BY

THE UNITED STATES' ENTRY
INTO THE SECOND WORLD WAR--

AND TOGETHER, THE TWIN CRISES
WOULD PRODUCE

THE LARGEST INTERNAL MIGRATIONS
IN THE NATION'S HISTORY.

BUT IN THE MIDST OF
THOSE TURBULENT TIMES,

COUNTRY MUSIC WOULD MANAGE

TO GROW IN POPULARITY.

BASED ON
THE REAL-LIFE EXPERIENCES

OF AMERICA'S WORKING PEOPLE,

THE MUSIC SEEMED
TO EXPRESS PERFECTLY

WHAT EVERYONE WAS GOING THROUGH.

COPING WITH LOSS HAD ALWAYS BEEN
ONE OF ITS PERVASIVE THEMES.

ACCORDING TO A SONG
BY THE CARTER FAMILY,

THE ONLY PLACE THE DEPRESSION
HADN'T REACHED WAS IN HEAVEN.

IN ITS INFANCY,
TO ME IT CAME FROM TWO PLACES.

AND PROBABLY TWO
POLAR OPPOSITE TYPE PLACES.

CAME FROM THE CHURCH,
WITH THE CARTER FAMILY

AND THEN IT CAME
FROM THE BEER JOINTS,

WITH JIMMIE RODGERS.

NARRATOR: THE MUSIC'S
FIRST SUPERSTAR, JIMMIE RODGERS,

HAD DIED IN 1933,

BUT FROM HIS
ADOPTED STATE OF TEXAS

TWO NEW STARS WOULD EMERGE

AND PUSH THE MUSIC'S
GEOGRAPHIC BASE WESTWARD.

FROM THEIR SMALL VALLEY
IN APPALACHIA,

THE CARTER FAMILY WOULD
CONTINUE SINGING SONGS

FIRMLY ROOTED IN
THE OLD TRADITIONS

OF BALLADRY AND GOSPEL.

BUT NOW, THE EQUALLY OLD
TRADITION OF STRING BAND MUSIC

WOULD BE RADICALLY CHANGED
BY TWO MORE MUSICIANS.

ONE, FROM THE MOUNTAINS
OF TENNESSEE,

WOULD USE HIS VOICE TO GIVE IT
HEIGHTENED EMOTION;

THE OTHER, FROM THE HILLS
OF KENTUCKY,

WOULD USE HIS MANDOLIN
TO INFUSE IT

WITH HEIGHTENED URGENCY.

STAPLES: " 'TIS THE SONG...

ROOSEVELT: BUT MORE IMPORTANT,
IT WILL MEAN

A GREATER CONTRIBUTION TO
GENERAL NATIONAL PROSPERITY...

NARRATOR: MEANWHILE,
THE STILL-YOUNG MEDIUM OF RADIO

WOULD BECOME INCREASINGLY
CENTRAL TO AMERICAN LIFE,

BINDING PEOPLE TOGETHER AS THEY
STRUGGLED TO WEATHER HARD TIMES.

STAPLES: "...YOU
HAVE LINGERED..."

MAN: I THINK
HARD TIMES AND COUNTRY MUSIC

WERE BORN FOR EACH OTHER.

THERE'S A STRANGE FAITH AND HOPE
THAT EXISTS IN COUNTRY MUSIC,

EVEN IN SONGS THAT HAVE NOTHING
TO DO WITH FAITH AND HOPE.

STAPLES: "SO MANY DAYS
YOU HAVE LINGERED

" AROUND MY CABIN DOOR

â OH, HARD TIMES,
COME AGAIN NO MORE â

THE CARTER FAMILY:
â I'M GOING WHERE

â THERE'S NO DEPRESSION

â TO THE LOVELY LAND
THAT'S FREE FROM CARE... â

NARRATOR: IN 1933,

IN THE COTTON FIELDS
NEAR BOAZ, ALABAMA,

LULA AND CHARLIE MADDUX
HAD FINALLY GIVEN UP

TRYING TO SUPPORT THEMSELVES
AND THEIR 7 CHILDREN

AS SHARECROPPERS.

MAN: MAMA, SHE HAD ALWAYS READ
THESE DIME NOVELS

ABOUT THE GOLD IN CALIFORNIA.

THEY SOLD EVERYTHING THEY HAD
AND THEY GOT \$35

FOR ALL THEIR
WORLDLY POSSESSIONS,

AND STARTED WALKING TO
CALIFORNIA THE NEXT DAY.

NARRATOR: WITH THEIR
5 YOUNGEST CHILDREN,

INCLUDING THEIR
ONLY DAUGHTER, ROSE,

THE MADDOXES SET OUT ON FOOT,

OCCASIONALLY CATCHING A RIDE
FROM A SYMPATHETIC MOTORIST.

IT TOOK THEM 5 LONG DAYS
TO TRAVEL JUST 200 MILES

AND REACH
JIMMIE RODGERS' HOMETOWN

OF MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI.

MADDOX: WE DIDN'T HAVE
ANY PLACE TO STAY,

SO WE WENT TO
THE SALVATION ARMY

AND THEY PUT US UP IN ONE OF
THEIR, UH, OVERNIGHT PLACES

FOR PEOPLE THAT ARE
DOWN AND OUT.

AND THEY SAID,
"YOU'LL NEVER GET TO CALIFORNIA

RIDING, AH, WALKING."

SAID, "WHY DON'T YOU
RIDE THE FREIGHTS?"

SO, THEY TOOK US DOWN TO
THE RAILROAD YARDS THE NEXT DAY

AND SHOWED US HOW
TO CATCH THE TRAINS.

WE RODE THE REST OF THE WAY
TO CALIFORNIA ON FREIGHT TRAINS.

WOODY GUTHRIE:
"I'M GOING DOWN THIS...

NARRATOR: THAT YEAR,
OFFICIALS OF JUST ONE OF

THE NATION'S RAILROADS,
THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC,

REPORTED THAT 683,000 TRANSIENTS
HAD BEEN DISCOVERED

MOVING FROM TOWN TO TOWN
IN THE COMPANY'S BOXCARS.

THE MADDOX FAMILY
WAS NOW AMONG THEM.

GUTHRIE: "THEY SAY
I'M A DUST BOWL REFUGEE,
YES, THEY SAY I'M..."

NARRATOR:
IN OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA,

THEY FOUND TEMPORARY SHELTER

LIVING IN A JUMBLE
OF DRAINAGE CULVERTS

CALLED PIPE CITY.

A REPORTER FOR
THE "OAKLAND TRIBUNE"

TOOK THEIR PICTURE
AND WROTE A STORY ABOUT THEM

AS AN EXAMPLE OF JUST HOW HARD
THE DEPRESSION HAD BECOME.

THEY TRIED PANNING FOR GOLD,
WITH NO LUCK

IN THE FOOTHILLS OF
THE SIERRA NEVADA,

THEN MOVED ON TO
THE SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY,

WHERE THEY PICKED CROPS
ALONGSIDE THE THOUSANDS OF OTHER

DESPERATE FAMILIES WHO WERE
ARRIVING EVERY DAY

FROM THE SOUTH AND PARTS
OF THE GREAT PLAINS

RAVAGED BY THE DUST BOWL.

MADDOX: "OKIES."

NO MATTER WHERE YOU WAS FROM,

IF YOU WASN'T FROM CALIFORNIA,

IF YOU WAS FROM THE SOUTH,
OR THE EASTERN STATES,

YOU WAS AN OKIE.

AND WE, WE WERE OKIES
AS FAR AS THEY WAS CONCERNED.

MAN: FRED MADDOX WAS
THE OLDEST OF THE BROTHERS,

AND THEY'RE ALL
IN THE COTTON PATCH

OUT IN DELANO, CALIFORNIA,
AND IT WAS SINFUL TO NOT BE

BENT OVER AND AT IT
FROM DAYLIGHT TILL DARK.

MAMA MADDUX
TURNED AROUND AND LOOKED

AND SAW FRED STARING
UP IN THE AIR.

AND SHE SAID, "FRED,
WHAT ARE YOU A-DOING?"

AND HE SAID, "MAMA,
I'VE BEEN A-THINKING."

SHE SAID, "EVERYBODY STOP."

SAID, "LOOK AT FRED,
HE'S A-THINKING."

AND THEY SAID, "WHAT ARE YOU
THINKING, FRED?"

"I'M A-THINKING WE NEED TO BE

A-PLAYIN' MUSIC
INSTEAD OF DOING THIS."

AND FRED ASSIGNED HIMSELF
TO THE BASS

AND HE ASSIGNED ALL THE BROTHERS

AND, "ROSE, YOU'RE GOING
TO BE OUR SINGER."

HAGGARD: HE DIDN'T KNOW
ANYTHING ABOUT PLAYING BASS.

SOMEBODY SAID, "LET ME TUNE
THAT THING FOR YOU."

AND HE, HE SAID,
"IT AIN'T NO USE," HE SAID,

"I DON'T KNOW WHERE
I'M AT ANYWAY."

AND HE JUST TUNED IT DOWN

AND MADE SORT OF A PERCUSSION
INSTRUMENT OUT OF IT,

AND WAS THE FRONT MAN
FOR THE GROUP

AND WENT INTO A RADIO STATION

AND GOT A JOB THE FIRST TIME.

TELLING ME THE STORY, HE SAID,
"MERLE," HE SAID, "YOU KNOW,

IT TOOK US ALMOST 48 HOURS
TO GET ON THE RADIO."

NARRATOR: FRED MADDOX'S
COTTON-PATCH DAYDREAM

TURNED INTO STEADY WORK.

BILLED AS THE MADDOX BROTHERS
AND ROSE,

THEY WERE SOON PLAYING
AT RODEOS AND CLUBS

FROM MODESTO TO BAKERSFIELD.

IN THEIR TRAVELS, THEY MET
A YOUNG DUST BOWL REFUGEE

WHO WAS PLAYING FOR TIPS
IN A NEARBY BAR.

HIS NAME WAS WOODY GUTHRIE.

LIKE THE MADDOXES, GUTHRIE WAS
A BIG FAN OF THE CARTER FAMILY--

HIS SONG, "THIS LAND
IS YOUR LAND,"

WOULD BORROW ITS MELODY
FROM A POPULAR CARTER TUNE,

"LITTLE DARLING, PAL OF MINE."

ROSE MADDOX, IN TURN, GREW FOND
OF GUTHRIE'S SONG "RENO BLUES,"

ABOUT A LAWYER WHO GETS SHOT

AFTER PROMISING
A WOMAN FROM HOLLYWOOD

TO GET HER A QUICK DIVORCE
FROM HER COWBOY HUSBAND.

ROSE SOON INCORPORATED IT
INTO THEIR ACT,

AS "PHILADELPHIA LAWYER."

ROSE MADDOX: "I WAS IN LOVE

WITH A HOLLYWOOD MAID

WILD BILL WAS
A GUN-TOTIN' COWBOY

10 NOTCHES WERE CARVED
ON HIS GUN

ROSE MADDOX: AND ALL
THE BOYS AROUND RENO

LEFT WILD BILL'S
MAIDEN ALONE

ONE NIGHT WHEN
HE WAS RETURNING

FROM RIDIN' THE RANGE
IN THE COLD

HE DREAMED OF
HIS HOLLYWOOD SWEETHEART

HER LOVE WAS
AS LASTING AS GOLD

AS HE DREW NEAR HER WINDOW

A SHADOW HE SAW ON THE SHADE

[MAN LAUGHS]

'T WAS THE GREAT
PHILADELPHIA LAWYER

MAKIN' LOVE TO BILL'S
HOLLYWOOD MAID

[GUNSHOT]

[WOMAN SCREAMS]

AND THEN YOU HEAR A SHOT
ON OUR RECORD AND THEN IT GOES,

TONIGHT BACK IN
OLD PENNSYLVANIA

AMONG THOSE BEAUTIFUL PINES

THERE'S ONE LESS
PHILADELPHIA LAWYER

IN OLD PHILADELPHIA
TONIGHT

OH, YEAH!

MADDOX BROTHERS AND ROSE:
"...PHILADELPHIA LAWYER

" IN OLD PHILADELPHIA...

NARRATOR: WITH THEIR EXUBERANT
LITTLE SISTER FRONT AND CENTER,

FOR THE NEXT TWO DECADES,
THE MADDOX BROTHERS AND ROSE

WOULD BE KNOWN AS "THE MOST
COLORFUL HILLBILLY BAND

IN THE WORLD."

ROOSEVELT: THE NATION
MUST AND SHALL BE

CONSIDERED AS A WHOLE

AND NOT AS AN AGGREGATION
OF DISJOINTED GROUPS.

MAY WE COME TO KNOW EVERY PART

OF OUR GREAT HERITAGE
IN THE DAYS TO COME.

ROY ACUFF: " THE RADIO
STATION WHERE THE MIGHTY HOSTS "

" OF HEAVEN SING,
TURN YOUR RADIO ON "

MEN: " TURN YOUR RADIO ON,
TURN YOUR RADIO ON "

NARRATOR: AMONG
THE MANY BUSINESSES

BROUGHT TO THEIR KNEES
BY THE GREAT DEPRESSION,

FEW WERE HARDER HIT THAN
THE RECORDING INDUSTRY.

FOR AMERICANS STRUGGLING
SIMPLY TO SURVIVE,

BUYING A RECORD WAS NOW A LUXURY
THEY COULD NO LONGER AFFORD.

MAN: " TURN YOUR RADIO ON,
TURN YOUR RADIO ON... "

NARRATOR: BUT LISTENING
TO THE RADIO WAS FREE,

AND THROUGHOUT THE 1930s,

MORE AND MORE STATIONS REALIZED

THEY COULD ATTRACT
LARGE AUDIENCES

BY OFFERING PROGRAMS
THAT FEATURED OLD-TIME MUSIC.

MAN: TUNE IN
THE RADIO EACH NIGHT

WITH NO COST AT ALL
AND YOU COULD HEAR

THE, UH, THE RADIO HILLBILLIES.

YOU COULD HEAR THE, EARLY IN
THE MORNING, UH, AT NOON TIME,

WHEN PEOPLE CAME HOME FROM WORK,

OR YOU COULD HEAR THEM
ON SATURDAY NIGHT

AT JAMBOREES OR THE, UH,
THE BARN DANCES.

AND THE MUSIC JUST PROVIDED
ENCOURAGEMENT TO PEOPLE.

IT ENABLED THEM TO COPE
WITH HARD TIMES.

YOU KNOW, YOU COULD
LOSE YOURSELF

IN THE LIFE OF THE COWBOY,
OR THE LIFE OF THE HOBO,

OR LISTEN TO A GOSPEL SONG
AND GAIN ASSURANCE

FOR A BRIGHTER DAY
BEYOND THIS WORLD.

MAN ON RADIO: ALL RIGHT.
THANK YOU OUT THERE.

WE WELCOME YOU ONE AND ALL
TO THE BRUSH CREEK...

NARRATOR: KMBC IN KANSAS CITY

HOSTED THE BRUSH CREEK FOLLIES;

WOWO IN FORT WAYNE, INDIANA,
HAD THE HOOSIER HOP.

THERE WAS CINCINNATI'S
MIDWESTERN HAYRIDE,

VIRGINIA'S OLD DOMINION
BARN DANCE,

ST. LOUIS' OLD FASHIONED
BARN DANCE,

AND CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA'S
CRAZY BARN DANCE.

MAN ON RADIO:
THANK YOU VERY MUCH, LEON...

MAN: AND PEOPLE WOULD
GATHER IN AT OUR PLACE

TO LISTEN TO THE RADIO.

NOBODY ELSE HAD A RADIO
IN THAT NEIGHBORHOOD.

AND, BY THAT TIME, UM,

JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA
HAD A BARN DANCE

AND HOPKINSVILLE, KENTUCKY,
AND SO,

YOU COULD JUST GO FROM ONE TO
ANOTHER AND LISTEN ALL NIGHT.

AS ONE SIGNED OFF, WE'D HUNT UP
ANOTHER ONE, YOU KNOW?

MY MOM WOULD COOK 'EM BREAKFAST
AND THEY'D GO HOME.

MAN ON RADIO: THAT WAS
SWELL, GANG. NOW...

WISEMAN: HAD ONE NEIGHBOR
THAT WAS CLOSE ENOUGH,

IT WAS A GOOD QUARTER OF
A MILE AWAY,

BUT HE WOULD COME OUT
ON HIS PORCH AND LISTEN...

AS WE PLAYED IT WITH THE WINDOWS
OPEN IN THE SUMMERTIME.

[LAUGHS]

NARRATOR: ONE OF THE STARS
OF WHEELING, WEST VIRGINIA'S

SATURDAY NIGHT JAMBOREE
WAS THE SINGER AND COMEDIAN

LOUIS MARSHALL JONES.

THOUGH ONLY IN HIS
EARLY TWENTIES,

JONES HAD A VOICE
THAT SEEMED MUCH OLDER,

SO THEY NICKNAMED HIM
"GRANDPA JONES"

AND ENCOURAGED HIM
TO DRESS THE PART

IN OLD BOOTS
AND A BRUSH-HANDLE MOUSTACHE.

GRANDPA JONES: "OH, THEY
CALL IT THAT OLD MOUNTAIN DEW"

NARRATOR: HE WOULD PLAY THE ROLE
FOR THE NEXT 60 YEARS--

LONG ENOUGH THAT
HIS SPECIAL MAKE-UP

WAS NO LONGER NECESSARY.

GRANDPA JONES: "...WITH SOME
GOOD, OLD MOUNTAIN DEW"

NARRATOR: BUT IN
THE EARLY 1930s,

THE SHOW WITH
THE BIGGEST AUDIENCE--

ONE OF ONLY 20 STATIONS THAT HAD
BEEN GRANTED A FEDERAL LICENSE

FOR A POWERFUL
50,000-WATT SIGNAL--

WAS STILL THE NATIONAL
BARN DANCE ON CHICAGO'S WLS.

MAN: AND IT REACHED
SO MANY STATES.

IT REACHED MY, UH,
FINNISH GRANDPARENTS

IN NORTHERN MICHIGAN.

THAT'S ALL THEY LISTENED TO.

IN THE 1930s, THE NATIONAL
BARN DANCE WAS THE SHOW.

NARRATOR: SO MANY PEOPLE WANTED
TO SEE THE BARN DANCE IN PERSON

THAT WLS MOVED IT
TO THE 1,200-SEAT

EIGHTH STREET THEATRE
IN DOWNTOWN CHICAGO,

CHARGED A WHOPPING
90 CENTS A TICKET,

STAGED TWO TWO-HOUR SHOWS
EVERY SATURDAY NIGHT,

AND, IN THE MIDST
OF THE DEPRESSION,

HAD TO TURN FANS
AWAY AT THE DOOR.

AMONG ITS STARS WERE
LITTLE GEORGIE GOBEL,

WHO IN 20 YEARS WOULD HAVE

HIS OWN NATIONAL
TELEVISION SHOW;

MYRTLE ELEANOR COOPER,
KNOWN AS LULU BELLE,

WHO WAS VOTED THE MOST POPULAR

FEMALE RADIO ENTERTAINER
IN AMERICA;

AND RED FOLEY
OF BLUE LICK, KENTUCKY,

WHOSE SONG "PEACE IN THE VALLEY"

BECAME ONE OF
THE FIRST GOSPEL TUNES

TO SELL A MILLION RECORDS.

COON CREEK GIRLS:

“ OH, POLLY, PRETTY POLLY

“ COME GO ALONG WITH ME...

NARRATOR: LILY MAY LEDFORD
AND THE COON CREEK GIRLS,

COUNTRY MUSIC'S FIRST
ALL-FEMALE STRING BAND,

BECAME SO POPULAR
THEY WERE CHOSEN

TO PERFORM AT THE WHITE HOUSE
FOR ENGLAND'S KING GEORGE VI.

LILY MAY SAID SHE WAS NERVOUS

UNTIL SHE SAW KING GEORGE
TAPPING HIS FEET.

BUT OF ALL THE STARS CREATED
BY THE NATIONAL BARN DANCE,

NONE WOULD BECOME MORE FAMOUS,

OR CONTRIBUTE MORE TO CHANGING
THE IMAGE OF HILLBILLY MUSIC,

THAN A SLIM, SANDY-HAIRED SINGER
FROM THE SOUTHERN PLAINS,

WHO WOULD POINT THE MUSIC
IN A NEW DIRECTION: WEST.

ORVON GROVER AUTRY HAD NEVER
INTENDED TO BECOME A COWBOY.

BORN IN TEXAS IN 1907,

HE GREW UP ON A FARM,
NOT A RANCH, IN OKLAHOMA.

AFTER BUYING A GUITAR FROM

A SEARS, ROEBUCK CATALOGUE
AT AGE 12,

HE SHOWED NO INTEREST IN
GUNS OR RIDING HORSES,

A COUSIN REMEMBERED:

"HE JUST WANTED TO SIT AROUND
AND PLAY THE GUITAR AND SING."

AFTER QUITTING HIGH SCHOOL,
HE TOOK A JOB

AS A TELEGRAPH OPERATOR FOR

THE ST. LOUIS
AND SAN FRANCISCO RAILROAD,

BRINGING HIS GUITAR ALONG
TO PASS THE TIME.

IN 1927, HE TRAVELED
TO NEW YORK CITY,

HOPING TO LAND
A RECORDING CONTRACT.

TWO LABELS TURNED HIM AWAY
WITH THE ADVICE

HE SHOULD INSTEAD
LEARN HOW TO YODEL,

A TECHNIQUE HIS IDOL
JIMMIE RODGERS HAD MADE POPULAR.

GENE AUTRY: "YODEL-E-OH

" DEL-E-OH, DEL-EH-EE

NARRATOR:
NOW CALLING HIMSELF "GENE,"

AUTRY LANDED SOME APPEARANCES

ON TULSA STATION KVOO,

AND IN 1929
RETURNED TO NEW YORK,

WHERE HE WAS SOON TURNING OUT

IMITATIONS OF RODGERS'
POPULAR SONGS

ON AN ASSORTMENT
OF DISCOUNT LABELS.

GREEN: AS AN ARTIST, GENE AUTRY

OBTAINING THE SAME LEVEL OF
JIMMIE RODGERS, AS SO MANY DID.

FACT, YOU ALMOST CAN'T

TELL THEIR VOICES APART

ON GENE AUTRY'S
1928, '29 RECORDS.

AND PART OF THAT
WAS QUITE DELIBERATE.

IF YOU COULD SPEND 75 CENTS
TO HEAR JIMMIE RODGERS SING

"BLUE YODEL NUMBER FOUR" ON RCA,

YOU MIGHT BE TEMPTED
TO SPEND 35 CENTS

TO HEAR GENE AUTRY
SING IT ON CONQUEROR.

AUTRY: "OH, DEL-EH-EE

NARRATOR: AFTER HIS OWN
SENTIMENTAL SONG

"SILVER HAired DADDY OF MINE"

BECAME A BIG HIT IN 1931,

AUTRY LANDED
A REGULAR SPOT ON WLS

AS THE "OKLAHOMA COWBOY,"

WHERE HE DROPPED HIS
JIMMIE RODGERS IMITATIONS

IN FAVOR OF SONGS LIKE
THE CONFIDENT AND OPTIMISTIC

"HOME ON THE RANGE," SAID TO BE

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT'S
FAVORITE SONG.

AUTRY: "OH, GIVE A HOME

WHERE THE BUFFALO ROAM

WHERE THE DEER
AND THE ANTELOPE PLAY

WHERE SELDOM IS HEARD
A DISCOURAGING WORD

AND THE SKIES ARE NOT
CLOUDY ALL DAY

â HOW OFTEN AT NIGHT
WHEN THE HEAVENS ARE BRIGHT â

â WITH THE LIGHT FROM
THE GLITTERING STARS â

â HAVE I STOOD THERE AMAZED

â AND ASKED AS I GAZED

â IF THEIR GLORY EXCEEDS
THAT OF OURS? â

â HOME, HOME ON THE RANGE...

NARRATOR: AS
THE DEPRESSION DEEPENED,

WITH IMPOVERISHED AMERICANS
INCREASINGLY SEEKING ESCAPE,

GENE AUTRY BEGAN MAKING
PERSONAL APPEARANCES

ATTIRED IN FANCY
WESTERN CLOTHES:

ORNATE, HANDMADE COWBOY BOOTS

WITH HIS PANTS TUCKED IN
TO SHOW THEM OFF;

A BIG BELT BUCKLE;
AND CUSTOM COWBOY SHIRT

WITH A SCARF AT THE NECK,

ALL TOPPED OFF BY
A WIDE-BRIMMED STETSON HAT.

THE SEARS CATALOGUE OFFERED
A GENE AUTRY ROUNDUP GUITAR

FOR \$9.65--WITH GENE GETTING
A DIME FOR EACH SALE.

ON AIR, HE ENCOURAGED LISTENERS

TO SEND IN 50 CENTS FOR
A SPECIAL GENE AUTRY SONGBOOK,

AND EVERY WEEK FILLED
A WASTEBASKET WITH COINS

AS HE OPENED HIS MAIL.

HE SPENT SOME OF THE CASH

ON A NEW MARTIN GUITAR,
LIKE THE ONE JIMMIE RODGERS HAD,
WITH HIS NAME INSCRIBED
ON THE FINGERBOARD.

WHEN RODGERS DIED IN 1933,
AUTRY QUICKLY RECORDED
4 DIFFERENT TRIBUTE SONGS,
ALL OF THEM BIG SELLERS.

BUT HE WAS NO LONGER
A PALE SHADOW OF HIS HERO;

HE WAS A BONA FIDE STAR
IN HIS OWN RIGHT--

A SINGING COWBOY--

AND OTHERS FOLLOWED HIS EXAMPLE.

MALONE: EVERYBODY LOVES COWBOYS.

AND SO, WHETHER THEY CAME FROM
THE HILLS OF WEST VIRGINIA

OR THE PINEY WOODS
OF EAST TEXAS,

THEY TENDED TO WEAR
COWBOY BOOTS AND COWBOY HATS,

AND SOMETIMES GIVE THEMSELVES
COWBOY NAMES.

NARRATOR: SINGING COWBOYS,
AND COWGIRLS, WERE EVERYWHERE.

AND, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER
REAL COWBOYS

HAD EVER YODELED
TO THEIR CATTLE HERDS

DURING THE TRAIL DRIVES
OF THE 1800s,

THEY ALL WERE YODELING NOW.

PATSY MONTANA: â€œ...BE
A COWBOY'S SWEETHEART â€œ

GREEN: EVERY GROUP OF MEN
WHO ARE ISOLATED

DEVELOP A SONG TRADITION.

THERE ARE LUMBERJACK SONGS;
THERE ARE SAILOR SHANTIES;

AND THE COWBOYS DID,
DOUBTLESS, SING,

PROBABLY NOT NEARLY AS MUCH
AS IT'S SHOWN IN THE WESTERNS

OR WE'RE LED TO BELIEVE.

ONCE GENE AUTRY
MADE IT REALLY POPULAR

AND BUILDING OFF THE HUGE
SUCCESS OF JIMMIE RODGERS,

THEN EVERY COWBOY HAD TO YODEL.

NARRATOR: THERE WAS TEX OWENS
ON KMBC IN KANSAS CITY;

TEXAS JIM LEWIS
AND HIS LONE STAR RANGERS

ON DETROIT'S WJR;

AND IN NEW YORK CITY, ON WHN,

TEX RITTER, A DEEP-VOICED
BROADWAY STAR

WHO ACTUALLY WAS FROM TEXAS.

RITTER HAD APPEARED IN THE PLAY
"GREEN GROW THE LILACS,"

WHICH WOULD LATER BE TURNED INTO
THE MUSICAL "OKLAHOMA!"

DOLLY AND MILLIE GOOD,
SISTERS FROM EAST ST. LOUIS,

PERFORMED AS THE GIRLS
OF THE GOLDEN WEST,

AND SAID THEY HAD
LEARNED TO YODEL

BY LISTENING TO COYOTES HOWL.

RUBY BLEVINS OF HOPE, ARKANSAS
ADOPTED THE NAME PATSY MONTANA

AND IN 1933 CAME TO
THE BARN DANCE.

PATSY MONTANA: "I ...BE
A COWBOY'S SWEETHEART..."

NARRATOR: SHE WAS BACKED
BY THE KENTUCKY RAMBLERS,

WHO CHANGED THEIR NAME
TO THE PRAIRIE RAMBLERS.

HER SONG "I WANT TO BE
A COWBOY'S SWEETHEART"

BECAME A RUNAWAY BEST SELLER.

IN 1934, GENE AUTRY
GOT A BIG BREAK.

"OH, THAT OLD...

NARRATOR:
IN HOLLYWOOD, REPUBLIC PICTURES

WANTED HIM TO SING A FEW SONGS

IN A COWBOY PICTURE, ONE OF
THE MANY LOW-COST "B" MOVIES

STUDIOS WERE CHURNING OUT FOR
THEIR CASH-STRAPPED AUDIENCES,

DESPERATE FOR DIVERSION.

THE NEXT YEAR,
AFTER TAKING RIDING LESSONS,

AUTRY GOT A STARRING ROLE
OF HIS OWN

IN A SERIES OF FILMS
CALLED "THE PHANTOM EMPIRE,"

A MIXTURE OF SCIENCE FICTION
AND A WESTERN,

IN WHICH HE PLAYED HIMSELF--

A SINGING COWBOY
WITH A RADIO SHOW

WHO ALSO DOES BATTLE
WITH A RACE OF PEOPLE

THOUSANDS OF MILES BELOW
THE EARTH'S SURFACE,

THE MURANIANS, WHO ARE
DEVELOPING A POWERFUL DEATH RAY.

GREEN: GENE AUTRY'S UP ON
THE SURFACE OF THE EARTH

SINGING HIS RADIO SONGS ON
THE AIR WITH SMILEY BURNETTE...

AND DEEP BELOW,
IN MURANIA, THERE ARE...

IS AN EVIL EMPIRE [LAUGHS]

AND THEY FIND THEIR WAY
DOWN THERE.

AND THESE MEN IN THESE
INCREDIBLY CHEESY SILVER SUITS

WALKING AROUND IN MURANIA.

MAN: COME ON,
WE GOT TO GET...

LEAD 'EM
PAST THOSE...

GREEN: AND THEN, "OH!
I'VE GOT TO GET BACK

TO DO THE RADIO SHOW."

SO, THEY GO BACK UP
TO THE SURFACE OF THE EARTH

AND SING HAPPILY FOR THE PEOPLE.

â A LONG, LONG
TIME AGO â

â AS ALL YOU FOLKS
SHOULD KNOW â

â UNCLE NOAH BUILT
HIMSELF AN ARK â

NARRATOR: WITH THE SUCCESS OF
"THE PHANTOM EMPIRE,"

AUTRY MOVED PERMANENTLY
TO CALIFORNIA,

WHERE HE STARRED IN
10 FEATURE FILMS IN TWO YEARS.

MAN 1: WHAT DO YOU WANT?

MAN 2: I WANT THAT
10,000, CLAUDE.

MAN 1: WHAT 10,000?

MAN 2: MY NAME'S AUTRY.

MAN 1: AND MINE'S
ROBINSON CRUSOE.

HOW'D YOU FIND ME?

HEARD YOU SING
ON THE RADIO.

YOU HAVE A PRETTY
GOOD VOICE, TOO.

WHEN ARE YOU GONNA
SING AGAIN?

I DON'T WANT
TO MISS IT.

WHAT TIME
IS IT NOW?

NARRATOR: THEY TOOK ON
MORE CONTEMPORARY ISSUES.

YOU'VE BEEN
FIGURING OUT

A LOT OF THINGS
LATELY, AUTRY.

TRY TO FIGURE YOUR
WAY OUT OF THIS.

NARRATOR: THE VILLAINS
WERE NOW OFTEN

CORRUPT POLITICIANS
OR RUTHLESS BUSINESSMEN.

MOST OF THE MOVIES COST
LESS THAN \$20,000 TO PRODUCE,

AND EACH MADE NEARLY
A MILLION DOLLARS.

GREEN: EVERY STUDIO BUT MGM
DEVELOPED A SINGING COWBOY.

THERE WAS A MEXICAN

SINGING COWBOY--TITO GUIZAR.

THERE WAS A SINGING COWGIRL--
DOROTHY PAGE.

THERE WAS AN AFRICAN AMERICAN
SINGING COWBOY--HERB JEFFRIES.

JUST EVERY STUDIO
HAD TO HAVE ONE.

ROY ROGERS AND THE SONS
OF THE PIONEERS:
"SEE THEM TUMBLING DOWN...

NARRATOR: WITH SO MANY
SINGING COWBOY FILMS BEING MADE,

THE DEMAND FOR
NEW SONGS INCREASED.

NO ONE WAS BETTER
AT SUPPLYING THEM

THAN YET ANOTHER COWBOY BAND
CALLED THE SONS OF THE PIONEERS.

ROY ROGERS AND THE SONS
OF THE PIONEERS: "...WITH
THE TUMBLING TUMBLEWEEDS"

NARRATOR: WITH THEIR
PRECISE HARMONIES,

THEY HELPED REDEFINE
THE SOUND OF COWBOY SONGS.

BOB NOLAN WAS THEIR
CHIEF SONGWRITER,

COMPOSING SUCH CLASSICS
AS "COOL WATER,"

AND THE TITLE SONG FOR
A NEW GENE AUTRY FILM,

"TUMBLING TUMBLEWEEDS."

GREEN: BOB NOLAN READ A LOT OF
KEATS, A LOT OF SHELLEY.

HE WAS A REAL POET WHO HAD
A GREAT GIFT FOR MELODY, TOO.

LONELY BUT FREE I'LL BE FOUND,

THAT'S THE--THAT'S THE HEART

OF COWBOY MUSIC, RIGHT THERE.

ROY ROGERS AND THE SONS
OF THE PIONEERS: "â€¦ WITH
THE TUMBLING TUMBLEWEEDS "â€¦

GREEN: THAT'S WHAT PEOPLE LOVE
ABOUT THE COWBOY.

OUT THERE, LONELY BUT FREE,
ANSWERING TO NOBODY.

LONELY BUT FREE I'LL BE FOUND.

NARRATOR: BY 1937,
THE SINGING COWBOY BOOM

HAD SPAWNED 530 WESTERNS
IN 4 YEARS,

MOST OF THEM SCOFFED AT
BY THE CRITICS,

BUT ADORED BY THE FANS,
PARTICULARLY YOUNGSTERS FROM

RURAL AND WORKING CLASS
FAMILIES.

AND WHEN GENE AUTRY
RELEASED HIS NEW FILM

"PUBLIC COWBOY NO. 1,"
ITS TITLE WAS NO EXAGGERATION.

AUTRY: "â€¦ AND O'ER
THE HILLS... "â€¦

MAN: I GREW UP GOING
TO GENE AUTRY MOVIES

EVERY SATURDAY.

AUTRY: ...COME ON,

WE'RE HEADING FOR
BOX CANYON.

MAN: UH, GENE WAS MY HERO.

HE WAS A, YOU KNOW, A GOOD GUY.

YOU KNOW, HE, HE NEVER LIED.

YOU KNOW, NEVER DID A LOT WRONG.

AUTRY: "MAD ABOUT YOU,
WHAT A CHANCE..."

NELSON: AND HE ALWAYS GOT
THE GIRL IN THE END. [LAUGHS]

"MAKING ME MAD
ABOUT YOU"

NARRATOR: BESIDES HIS FILMS,
AUTRY KEPT

A FURIOUS PACE
IN THE RECORDING STUDIO

AND TOURING THE COUNTRY, PULLING
HIS HORSE CHAMPION IN A TRAILER

TO SHOWS WHERE
HIS MOVIES HAD PLAYED.

HIS WIFE INA SET UP
A FILING SYSTEM

WITH THE NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF
FANS WHO HAD WRITTEN TO HIM,

AND WHEN HE CAME TO THEIR TOWN,

AUTRY WOULD CHECK
THE LOCAL PHONE BOOK

AND CALL THEM UP.

MAN: PUT 'EM UP, SHERIFF.

NARRATOR: IN EARLY 1938,
AUTRY TOLD REPUBLIC PICTURES

HE WOULDN'T MAKE ANY MORE
MOVIES FOR THEM

UNTIL THEY PAID HIM MORE MONEY.

WON'T LIKE THAT.
RIGHT ARM...

NARRATOR: REPUBLIC REFUSED.

THEY IMMEDIATELY AUDITIONED
FOR HIS REPLACEMENT,

EVENTUALLY SETTLING ON AN ACTOR

WHO HAD APPEARED IN
ONE OF AUTRY'S MOVIES.

IT WAS LEONARD SLYE FROM
THE SONS OF THE PIONEERS.

THE ONLY PROBLEM WAS HIS NAME.

THE STUDIO EXECUTIVES
DIDN'T THINK LEONARD SLYE

SOUNDED LIKE THE NAME
OF A MOVIE HERO.

SO, THEY CHANGED IT.

FROM NOW ON, LEONARD SLYE
WOULD BE KNOWN AS ROY ROGERS.

STUART: THE CARTER FAMILY IS

THE FIRST FAMILY
OF COUNTRY MUSIC.

IT'S THAT SIMPLE.

THE FOUNDATIONAL SONGS
OF COUNTRY MUSIC

WERE GATHERED OR WRITTEN
BY A.P. CARTER.

THERE'S OUR FIRST LEAD GUITAR
PLAYER IN COUNTRY MUSIC--

MOTHER MAYBELLE.

WOMAN: " LAST NIGHT
WHILE IN A DREAM "

" I SAW MY DEAR, OLD MOTHER
DOWN BY... "

WOMAN: AND SARA'S VOICE.

CARTER FAMILY: " DON'T ASK ME
WHY I'M WEEPING... "

WOMAN: LIKE WAILING
AT THE GRAVE,

THAT KIND OF KEENING,
JUST PIERCE YOU.

CARTER FAMILY:
" FOR I'VE AN AGED MOTHER...

SO PLAIN SPOKEN AND SO WITHOUT

ANY KIND OF EMBELLISHMENT

OR FRILL,

JUST TELLING THE TRUTH,
ONE NOTE AT A TIME.

SARA CARTER: "WELL,
AH-LE-HO, LE-HO-LAY"

NARRATOR: THE DEPRESSION
HAD TAKEN A HEAVY TOLL

ON THE CARTER FAMILY IN
MACES SPRING, VIRGINIA.

SALES OF THEIR RECORDS
HAD DROPPED

TO A FEW THOUSAND PER RELEASE.

SARA CARTER OFTEN REFUSED
TO TAKE PART

IN WHAT FEW LIVE PERFORMANCES
HER HUSBAND A.P.

AND HER SISTER-IN-LAW MAYBELLE

COULD ARRANGE IN
THE IMMEDIATE AREA.

MORE TROUBLING WAS A RIFT THAT
HAD BEEN GROWING OVER THE YEARS

BETWEEN A.P. AND SARA.

SHE CONSIDERED HIM
COLD AND CONSTANTLY DISTRACTED.

HIS TRIPS TO COLLECT MORE SONGS

KEPT HIM AWAY FROM HOME
FOR WEEKS AT A TIME,

AND SHE RESENTED IT.

TO HELP OUT WITH
CHORES AROUND THE FARM

WHILE HE WAS ON THE ROAD,
A.P. HIRED

HIS HANDSOME, YOUNG COUSIN,
COY BAYS,

HARD-WORKING AND AFFECTIONATE,
WITH UNFORGETTABLE BLUE EYES.

SARA CARTER: "I SEE
THE PALE MOON..."

NARRATOR: WHEN IT BECAME CLEAR
THAT SARA AND COY

WERE STARTING TO FALL IN LOVE,

THE EXTENDED FAMILY
GREW CONCERNED AND INTERVENED.

IN THE END, COY'S PARENTS
DECIDED TO MOVE TO CALIFORNIA,

AND TAKE HIM WITH THEM.

SARA MOVED OUT OF THE HOUSE

TO LIVE WITH RELATIVES
ACROSS CLINCH MOUNTAIN.

ALL OF THIS POSED A BIG PROBLEM
FOR RALPH PEER,

WHO HAD BEEN MANAGING THE TRIO
AND PUBLISHING THEIR SONGS

SINCE HE FIRST RECORDED THEM
IN 1927.

HE HAD PROMOTED THEM
AS THE CARTER FAMILY,

AND WHEN SARA REFUSED TO COME TO
AN UPCOMING RECORDING SESSION,

PEER ASKED HIS WIFE ANITA
TO REACH OUT TO HER.

WOMAN: "DEAR SARA, I REALIZE

"THAT IT WOULD BE
DISTINCTLY AWKWARD

"FOR BOTH YOU AND A.P.
TO WORK TOGETHER AGAIN,

"BUT ON THE OTHER HAND,
THE CARTER FAMILY

"HAS BECOME WELL KNOWN
AND THERE IS A CHANCE

"TO MAKE SOME MORE MONEY, EVEN
IN THESE DAYS OF DEPRESSION.

"EVEN IF YOU NEVER

LIVE TOGETHER AGAIN,

"YOU COULD GET TOGETHER
FOR PROFESSIONAL PURPOSES

LIKE THE MOVIE STARS DO."

WOMAN: "A ...A-COMIN'...

NARRATOR: SARA RELUCTANTLY
GAVE IN,

SPENDING THE NIGHTS WITH
MAYBELLE AND HER HUSBAND ECK;

JOINING A.P. ONLY DURING THE DAY

TO PRACTICE FOR A SERIES
OF RECORDING SESSIONS.

IN THEM, THE CARTER FAMILY
RECORDED SOME SONGS

THAT A.P. HAD WRITTEN
ABOUT ROMANCE AND ABANDONMENT,

REFLECTING BOTH
HIS ANGER TOWARD SARA

AND THE LOVE HE STILL
FELT FOR HER.

CARTER FAMILY: "I WAS
STANDING BY THE WINDOW "

" ON ONE COLD AND CLOUDY DAY

" AND I SAW THE HEARSE
COME ROLLING "

" FOR TO CARRY MY MOTHER AWAY

NARRATOR: BUT THE CARTER FAMILY
ALSO RECORDED

WHAT WOULD BECOME ONE OF
THE MOST ENDURING SONGS

IN THE HISTORY
OF COUNTRY MUSIC,

AN OLD GOSPEL TUNE THAT
AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN MINISTER

HAD REWORKED AND RECORDED,

AND A.P. REWORKED AGAIN,

ABOUT THE DEATH AND FUNERAL
OF A MOTHER.

CARTER FAMILY: "CAN THE CIRCLE
BE UNBROKEN"

"BY AND BY, LORD,
BY AND BY..."

STUART: IN THE OLD DAYS,
IN THE SOUTH, ESPECIALLY,

I KNOW PEOPLE BROUGHT
THEIR LOVED ONES BACK HOME

INSTEAD OF GOING TO
A FUNERAL HOME TO SAY FAREWELL,

AND THEN THEY'LL SIT AT A WAKE.

CAN YOU THINK OF
A MORE LONESOME THING TO SEE,

"SAW A HEARSE
COMING DOWN THE ROAD,"

TO CARRY THE MOST PRECIOUS THING
IN THIS WORLD

THAT BELONGED TO YOU, THAT
GOD EVER GAVE YOU, YOUR MAMA.

CARTER FAMILY: "CAN THE CIRCLE
BE UNBROKEN..."

CASH: YOU PUT THAT KIND OF
SUFFERING IN MUSIC AND ART,

AND YOU'RE LIBERATED.

DO YOU WANT TO TAKE IT IN
AND LET IT DESTROY YOU,

OR DO YOU WANT
TO PUT IT OUT THERE

AND MAKE IT SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL?

"I WAS STANDING BY MY WINDOW
ON A COLD AND CLOUDY DAY

AND SAW THAT HEARSE COME ROLLING
TO CARRY MY MOTHER AWAY."

WOMAN: MY GRANDMOTHER LOVED

"WILL THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN."

THERE WILL ALWAYS BE HARD TIMES.

BUT YOU HAVE TO HAVE
FAITH IN THAT

THERE'S GOING TO BE
A BETTER TIME.

FAITH IS WHAT GETS US GOING
EVERY MORNING.

CARTER FAMILY:
"CAN THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN

" BY AND BY, LORD...

WOMAN: I WAS BORN IN
DETROIT, MICHIGAN IN 1959.

MY GRANDMOTHER,
MY BLACK GRANDMOTHER,

FROM SELMA, ALABAMA, USED TO
SING THAT SONG TO ME.

SO, THAT ACTUALLY IS
THE FIRST COUNTRY SONG

THAT I EVER REALLY KNEW.

IT MEANT SO MUCH
TO MY GRANDMOTHER,

WHOSE GRANDMOTHER
WAS BORN ENSLAVED.

WHEN FAMILIES ARE BROKEN APART,

THAT THERE IS A PLACE
WE WILL COME TOGETHER,

THAT ALL THAT FAMILY THAT HAS
BEEN LOST WILL BE REUNITED.

BY AND BY NOW, WE'LL FIND
A BETTER HOME UP IN THE SKY.

MY GRANDMOTHER RESTED
ON THAT SONG.

SHE TRUSTED IN THAT SONG.

IT WAS THE ONLY HOPE
SHE'D EVER SEE

HER OWN MOTHER AGAIN, YOU KNOW?

A.P. CARTER:
â ...SISTERS CRYING

â WHAT A HOME SO SAD AND LONE

CARTER FAMILY: â CAN THE CIRCLE
BE UNBROKEN â

â BY AND BY, LORD, BY AND BY

â THERE'S A BETTER HOME
A-WAITING â

â IN THE SKY, LORD,
IN THE SKY â

NARRATOR: IN 1936, SARA FILED
FOR DIVORCE FROM A.P.

THEY KEPT IT ALL
AS QUIET AS POSSIBLE

AND CONTINUED
MAKING MORE RECORDS.

WOMAN: AND AUNT SARA
FELL IN LOVE WITH COY BAYS,

WHO HAPPENED TO BE
A RELATION OF OURS.

THAT WAS NOT A TIME
THAT PEOPLE GOT DIVORCED.

AND YOU DEFINITELY DIDN'T GET
DIVORCED IN THE CARTER FAMILY.

NARRATOR: STRAINED BUT
STILL PRESENTING

A PUBLIC FACE OF UNITY,

IN OCTOBER OF 1938,
THE CARTER FAMILY ARRIVED

IN THE TEXAS BORDER TOWN
OF DEL RIO.

SARA CARTER: â OUT IN
THE COLD WORLD AND... â

NARRATOR: THEY HAD ACCEPTED
A NEW HIGH-PAYING JOB

AT A BRAND-NEW

RADIO STATION, XERA,

JUST ACROSS THE RIO GRANDE
IN MEXICO.

THEY WOULD BE PAID
\$4,000 EACH--

NEARLY 3 TIMES THE AVERAGE WAGE
AT THE TIME--

AND HAVE TO WORK ONLY
6 MONTHS OF THE YEAR.

SARA CARTER: â€”a SOMEBODY'S...

NARRATOR: XERA WAS A SO-CALLED
BORDER BLASTER STATION,

500,000 WATTS IN STRENGTH,

10 TIMES THE POWER
OF WLS IN CHICAGO

OR ANY OTHER STATION
IN THE UNITED STATES.

AND IT WAS BEYOND THE REACH
OF AMERICAN REGULATORS.

ITS OWNER WAS NONE OTHER THAN
DR. JOHN R. BRINKLEY,

THE RADIO HUCKSTER WHO PROMISED
TO RESTORE MEN'S SEXUAL POTENCY

BY TRANSPLANTING GOAT GLANDS
INTO THEM.

BRINKLEY HAD ALREADY
MADE A FORTUNE

IN TINY MILFORD, KANSAS, BUT

WHEN THE KANSAS MEDICAL BOARD
REVOKED HIS LICENSE,

HE HAD MOVED TO DEL RIO.

THE CARTER FAMILY WAS A LONG WAY
FROM POOR VALLEY, VIRGINIA,

BUT THEY SETTLED INTO
THEIR NEW ROUTINE.

ONCE IN THE MORNING
AND ONCE IN THE EVENING,

THEY OPENED THEIR SHOW
WITH THEIR THEME SONG,

"KEEP ON THE SUNNY SIDE"...

CARTER FAMILY:
"ALWAYS ON THE SUNNY SIDE

"KEEP ON THE SUNNY SIDE..."

NARRATOR: AND PROMOTED
THEIR SPONSOR'S PRODUCTS:

A COLD MEDICINE CALLED PERUNA,
WHICH WAS 25% ALCOHOL,

AND KOLORBAK, A HAIR DYE
THAT CONTAINED LEAD.

MAN ON RADIO: USE IT REGULARLY
... HAIR.

MALONE: AND WHILE
YOU HEARD THE MUSIC,

YOU ALSO HAD TO PUT UP WITH
THE INCESSANT MERCHANDISING.

CARTER FAMILY:
"SUNNY SIDE OF LIFE

MALONE: HERE YOU HAVE
SOME OF THE SEEDIEST,

SOME OF THE MOST LOW-LIFE
ADVERTISING IMAGINABLE,

MAKING IT POSSIBLE FOR THESE
SONGS ABOUT "MAMA" AND "HOME"

AND THE "OLD,"--
THE "OLD COUNTRY CHURCH,"

AND THE "OLD-FASHIONED WAYS"
TO BE POPULARIZED.

THEY WENT HAND IN HAND.

WOMAN: ...E-R-A...

NARRATOR: XERA HAD A SIGNAL
THAT WAS SO OVERPOWERING,

LOCAL RANCHERS HEARD THE MUSIC
ON THEIR BARBED WIRE FENCES;

DEL RIO RESIDENTS
TALKING ON THE TELEPHONE

SOMETIMES HAD CONVERSATIONS
INTERRUPTED BY THE BROADCASTS;

AND THEIR CHILDREN, IT WAS SAID,

GOT GOOD RECEPTION
ON THEIR BRACES.

AT NIGHT, THE CARTERS COULD BE
HEARD AS FAR AWAY AS

NEW YORK, CALIFORNIA,
AND ALBERTA, CANADA;

THEIR SONGS WERE
NOW REACHING PEOPLE

WHO MIGHT NOT OTHERWISE
HAVE KNOWN ABOUT THEM.

IN THE DUST-RAVAGED TOWN
OF LITTLEFIELD, TEXAS,

WAYLON JENNINGS'
FIRST CHILDHOOD MEMORY

WAS OF HIS FATHER
CONNECTING THE FAMILY RADIO

TO THE PICKUP TRUCK'S BATTERY

SO THEY COULD LISTEN
TO THE CARTER FAMILY.

IN COLUMBUS, GEORGIA,
14-YEAR-OLD CHESTER ATKINS

HEARD MAYBELLE'S GUITAR-PICKING
ON A RADIO SET

HE HAD BUILT FROM
MAIL-ORDER PARTS.

AND IN TINY DYESS, ARKANSAS,

A NEW DEAL
RESETTLEMENT COMMUNITY

FOR IMPOVERISHED FARMERS,

A BOY NAMED J.R. CASH
WAS TUNING IN, TOO.

MAN: MY FATHER, AS A YOUNG BOY,

WOULD HAVE LISTENED
TO COUNTRY MUSIC

AND KNOWN WHAT IT WAS
BECAUSE OF THE CARTER FAMILY.

BUT IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR

DR. BRINKLEY
AND HIS RADIO STATION,

AND THE FACT THAT HE HAD TO MOVE
TO MEXICO TO BE ABLE TO DO THIS,

IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR THAT,
WE WOULDN'T KNOW COUNTRY MUSIC

AS WE KNOW IT TODAY.

SO, THANK YOU, DR. BRINKLEY.

NARRATOR: IN FEBRUARY OF 1939,

SARA CARTER PUT THE STATION'S
REACH TO A DIFFERENT USE.

SHE HAD NOT SEEN COY BAYS,

THE YOUNG MAN SHE HAD FALLEN
IN LOVE WITH, FOR YEARS,

AND HAD NOT RECEIVED RESPONSES

TO THE MANY LETTERS
SHE HAD SENT HIM.

DURING AN EVENING SHOW,
SHE STEPPED TO THE MICROPHONE

AND SAID, "I'M GONNA DEDICATE
THIS NEXT SONG

TO COY BAYS IN CALIFORNIA."

WITH THAT, MAYBELLE STARTED
STRUMMING HER GUITAR,

AND SARA BEGAN SINGING
ONE OF THEIR EARLIEST SONGS,

"I'M THINKING TONIGHT
OF MY BLUE EYES."

CARTER FAMILY: â OH,
I'M THINKING TONIGHT
OF MY BLUE EYES â

â AND I WONDER IF
HE EVER THINKS OF ME â

â OH, YOU TOLD ME ONCE, DEAR,
THAT YOU LOVED ME â

â YOU SAID THAT
WE NEVER WOULD PART â

NARRATOR: MORE THAN
1,600 MILES AWAY,

ON THE FAR SIDE OF
THE SIERRA NEVADA IN CALIFORNIA,

THE BAYS FAMILY HAD GATHERED
AROUND THEIR RADIO.

CARTER FAMILY: â OH, I'M
THINKING TONIGHT OF MY... â

NARRATOR: UP UNTIL THAT MOMENT,
COY THOUGHT SARA

HAD FORGOTTEN HIM.

HE HADN'T RECEIVED HER LETTERS

BECAUSE HIS MOTHER
HAD HIDDEN THEM.

"MOM," HE SAID.

"I'M GONNA GO GET SARA."

THEN HE SET OFF FOR TEXAS.

THEY WERE MARRIED WITHIN DAYS.

NO ONE OUTSIDE
THE IMMEDIATE FAMILY WAS TOLD.

A.P. WAS DESPONDENT.

"HE HAD NO ZEAL AFTER THAT,"
HIS SON REMEMBERED.

"HE WAS LOST."

HE WAS SO ILL AT EASE
DURING SUBSEQUENT BROADCASTS

THAT THE SPONSORS
EVENTUALLY SENT HIM HOME

A MONTH BEFORE

THE CONTRACT ENDED

BECAUSE, THEY BELIEVED,
"HE WAS TRANSMITTING HIS MOOD

UNWITTINGLY OVER THE AIR."

CARTER FAMILY: "a ...YOU, DEAR,
I LOVE YOU a"

NARRATOR: SARA
AND MAYBELLE CONTINUED

BROADCASTING WITHOUT HIM.

THEN MAYBELLE, TOO,
HEADED BACK TO POOR VALLEY.

SARA WENT WITH COY
TO CALIFORNIA.

CARTER FAMILY:
"a YOU MAY NOW FOREVER GO

[PLAYING UPBEAT TUNE]

MAN: WELL, YOU KNOW, THE WAY
I DEFINE COUNTRY MUSIC IS,

FIRST OF ALL, I CALL IT
COUNTRY WESTERN MUSIC.

IT'S THE MUSIC OF AMERICA,
FOR SURE.

AND IT'S AN AMALGAM.

IT'S EVERYTHING.

SOME PEOPLE WANTED
TO SAY THAT IT WAS

"AMERICA'S ONLY
ORIGINAL PURE MUSIC."

WELL, NO, IT'S BLUES.

IT'S JAZZ.

IT'S HILLBILLY.

IT'S EVERYTHING ABOUT
THE IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE

BROUGHT TO AMERICA
AND AMERICANIZED, YOU KNOW.

NARRATOR: IN THE 1930s,
A NEW SOUND

WAS SWEEPING THE NATION,
WHAT "VARIETY" MAGAZINE CALLED

AN "INDELIBLE NOTATION
ON THE EVOLUTION OF JAZZ."

[JAZZ MUSIC PLAYING]

KNOWN AS SWING, IT HAD INCUBATED
IN THE DANCE HALLS OF HARLEM,

BUT NOW AN ENTIRE GENERATION
OF AMERICANS--

WHITE AS WELL AS BLACK--
DANCED TO ITS BEAT,

FILLING BALLROOMS AND THEATERS
ALL ACROSS THE COUNTRY:

FROM THE PARAMOUNT IN MANHATTAN
AND THE ARAGON IN CHICAGO

TO THE PALOMAR IN LOS ANGELES,

WHERE BENNY GOODMAN
THRILLED AUDIENCES

WITH HIS VERSION OF THE MUSIC
FIRST PLAYED BY

LOUIS ARMSTRONG, DUKE ELLINGTON,
AND CHICK WEBB.

PEOPLE WERE SWINGING
IN TULSA, OKLAHOMA, TOO--

CROWDING TWICE A WEEK INTO

A FORMER
AUTOMOBILE DEALER'S GARAGE

CALLED CAIN'S DANCE ACADEMY
ON NORTH MAIN STREET.

BOB WILLIS: "WHERE'S THAT GAL
WITH THE RED DRESS ON?"

"SOME FOLKS CALL HER DINAH...

NARRATOR: BUT THE MUSIC
THEY MOVED TO WAS DIFFERENT.

WILLIS: "...LOUISIANA,

TAKE ME BACK TO TULSA

I'M TOO YOUNG TO MARRY

TAKE ME BACK TO TULSA,
I'M TOO YOUNG TO MARRY

NARRATOR: DRUMS, BASS--

AND A SYNCOPATED PIANO--

PROVIDED ITS PULSE,

JUST AS THEY DID
IN SWING BANDS,

AND MUSICIANS WERE
EXPECTED TO IMPROVISE

ON THEIR INSTRUMENTAL BREAKS,
JUST AS THEY DID IN JAZZ.

BUT INSTEAD OF SAXOPHONES,
CLARINETS, AND HORNS,

THIS MUSIC FEATURED
THE MAINSTAYS

OF A HILLBILLY BAND--
FIDDLES AND GUITAR.

IT WAS BOB WILLS
AND HIS TEXAS PLAYBOYS.

WILLS: TURN IT ON, AH,
TURN IT ON, BOYS, TURN IT ON

HAGGARD: IF SOMEBODY
DON'T LIKE WILLS,

HE'S IMMEDIATELY
UNDER SUSPICION WITH ME.

I GO...I SAY, LET'S, UH,
LET'S GO ON TO SOMETHING ELSE.

[LAUGHS]

NARRATOR: JIMMIE RODGERS
HAD CONNECTED

HILLBILLY MUSIC WITH THE BLUES.

GENE AUTRY HAD GIVEN IT
A FLAVOR OF THE OLD WEST.

BOB WILLS GAVE IT A BEAT--

A RAUCOUS, DANCE HALL BEAT
FROM TEXAS,

TOTALLY UNLIKE ANYTHING
FROM APPALACHIA

OR THE BIBLE BELT
OF THE DEEP SOUTH.

WILLS: â€œ ...I'M TOO YOUNG
TO WED THEE â€œ

NARRATOR: WITH AN ANCESTRY
THAT INCLUDED

ENGLISH, IRISH, CAJUN,
AND CHEROKEE STOCK,

JAMES ROBERT WILLS HAD BEEN BORN
IN 1905 NEAR KOSSE, TEXAS,

SOUTHEAST OF WACO, WITH
FIDDLE PLAYING IN HIS BLOOD.

BENSON: IF YOU GO SOUTH OF WACO,
IN TEXAS, IT'S...

IT WAS SETTLED MOSTLY BY
GERMANS, CZECHS, BOHEMIANS,

AND MEXICAN-AMERICANS.

THAT'S SOUTH TEXAS.

THE TRADITION OF BEER DRINKING
AND DANCING

IS VERY GERMAN,
EASTERN EUROPEAN.

NARRATOR: AS A BOY,
WILLS ABSORBED

ALL THE MUSIC AROUND HIM--

INCLUDING THE BLUES HE HEARD
FROM THE NEARBY SHANTIES OF

AFRICAN AMERICAN COTTON PICKERS,

WHOSE CHILDREN WERE
HIS PLAYMATES.

IN 1913, HIS FAMILY
MOVED BY WAGON

TO THE TEXAS PANHANDLE,
WHERE HE JOINED HIS FATHER

PLAYING AT ALL-NIGHT
RANCH DANCES.

IN REGIONAL FIDDLE CONTESTS,
THE CHAMPIONSHIP OFTEN CAME DOWN

TO WILLS, HIS FATHER,
AND ECK ROBERTSON,

THE MAN WHO HAD MADE
ONE OF THE FIRST RECORDINGS

OF HILLBILLY MUSIC
BACK IN 1922.

BENSON: YOU HAVE
CAJUN FIDDLELING,

YOU HAVE "OLD TIMEY,"
NEW ENGLAND FIDDLELING.

YOU'VE GOT
FRENCH-CANADIAN FIDDLELING.

BOB WAS A TOTAL ICONOCLAST.

HIS STYLE OF FIDDLELING
IS BOB WILLS.

IT'S BEAUTIFUL.
IT'S ORIGINAL.

IT'S PURELY TEXAS FIDDLELING BUT
IT OWES A LITTLE TO EVERYBODY.

BUT IT'S ALL BOB.

NARRATOR: HE MOVED BRIEFLY
TO NEW MEXICO,

WHERE HE FORMED A BAND WITH SOME
HISPANIC-AMERICAN MUSICIANS,

DEVELOPING A STYLE OF PLAYING
THAT INCORPORATED THEIR SOUND,

ALONG WITH THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN
BLUES HE ALWAYS LOVED.

BENSON: SO, YOU'VE GOT
FIDDLE TUNES, THE BLUES,

AND THEN YOU HAVE
THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN EXPERIENCE.

HE HAS A TUNE CALLED
"SPANISH TWO STEP."

IT ENCOMPASSES THE FEELING OF

THE HISPANIC MUSIC
OF THE DAY.

SO, BOB TOOK ALL OF THOSE THINGS

AND MADE IT INTO
WHAT WE CALL WESTERN SWING.

NARRATOR: RESTLESS FOR
BETTER OPPORTUNITIES,

HE MOVED TO FORT WORTH
JUST BEFORE THE CRASH OF 1929.

THERE, HE AND SINGER
MILTON BROWN

FORMED A BAND CALLED
THE LIGHT CRUST DOUGHBOYS

ON RADIO STATION KFJZ,

SPONSORED BY THE BURRUS MILL
AND ELEVATOR COMPANY.

WHEN THE COMPANY'S MANAGER,
PAPPY O'DANIEL,

REALIZED HOW POPULAR
THEY WERE WITH LISTENERS,

HE TOOK THEM ON THE ROAD
AND INSISTED ON INTRODUCING THEM

EVERYWHERE THEY PLAYED.

HE WOULD LATER CAPITALIZE
ON THE PUBLICITY

BY BECOMING GOVERNOR OF TEXAS

AND THEN NARROWLY DEFEATING
A YOUNG LYNDON JOHNSON

TO WIN A U.S. SENATE SEAT.

BENSON: HE'S A YOUNG MAN
IN FORT WORTH PLAYING MUSIC,

AND JAZZ IS THE MUSIC
OF THE DAY.

WILLS: " ...BABE,
WHAT CAN THE MATTER BE?
WHOA, BABE..."

BENSON: FIRST OF ALL,
JUST THE RACIAL ASPECT.

THE THIRTIES IN TEXAS
WERE BRUTAL, SEGREGATION,

AND THERE WERE LYNCHINGS.

IT WAS AMERICAN APARTHEID.

AND HERE WAS BOB WILLS IMITATING
LOUIS ARMSTRONG, BESSIE SMITH,

UH, EMMETT MILLER,
AND BLACK MUSIC.

THAT, IN ITSELF, IN TEXAS,
WAS REVOLUTIONARY.

NARRATOR: WHEN MILTON BROWN
QUIT THE BAND,

WILLS FOUND HIS REPLACEMENT
IN TOMMY DUNCAN,

WHO HAD BEEN SINGING
AT ROOT BEER STANDS FOR TIPS.

HAGGARD: AND HE SAID,
"MR. DUNCAN," HE SAID,

"IF YOU CAN HIT
'I AIN'T GOT NOBODY,'"

EMMETT MILLER'S
OLD TUNE, HE SAID,

"IF YOU CAN HIT THAT," HE SAID,
"YOU'VE GOT THE JOB.

IF YOU CAN'T,
YOU'RE OUT OF HERE."

AND BOB TOLD ME,
HE SAID--HE SAID,

"YOU KNOW," HE SAID,
"TOMMY HIT THAT SONG

MAYBE A LITTLE BIT BETTER
THAN OLD EMMETT."

NARRATOR: AFTER A DISPUTE
WITH O'DANIEL,

WILLS FORMED A BAND
CALLED THE PLAYBOYS--

APPEARING IN PULLOVER SWEATERS,
LIKE COLLEGE STUDENTS--

AND IN 1934 MOVED THEM ALL
TO OKLAHOMA,

WHERE THEY ENDED UP
AT TULSA'S KVOO,

BILLED AS BOB WILLS
AND HIS TEXAS PLAYBOYS.

THERE HE ADDED SAXOPHONES,
CLARINETS, AND HORNS

TO HIS BAND, AS HE EXPANDED
THE SOUND HE WANTED.

IN EVERY SONG, WILLS INTERJECTED
A FALSETTO "AH-HAA"

THAT BECAME HIS TRADEMARK,
THE SAME WAY JIMMIE RODGERS

HAD MADE THE BLUE YODEL HIS.

GREEN: THE...SOME PEOPLE
CALL IT A HOLLER.

AND HE...AND I DON'T
DO IT VERY WELL,

BUT HE WOULD ALWAYS DO
THIS LITTLE..."AHH HA!"

OR LITTLE COMMENTS--
"TAKE IT AWAY!"

OR, YOU KNOW, "DOMINO!"

HIS FIRST RECORDING SESSION,
BOB WILLS, YOU KNOW, CUTS LOOSE

AND TOMMY DUNCAN SINGING
AND SUDDENLY, "AH, TOMMY!"

WILLS: â€œ ...HOW COME
YOU LET ME DOWN?
WHOA, BABE... â€œ

"STOP. STOP THIS SESSION

RIGHT NOW.

YOU CAN'T DO THAT.
YOU CAN'T DO THAT ON A RECORD."

AND BOB SAYS, "OK,
THEN WE'RE GOING HOME."

"OH, ALL RIGHT.
ALL RIGHT.

YOU GO AHEAD."
AND IT BECAME HIS SIGNATURE.

PEOPLE JUST EXPECTED IT.

MAN: IF YOU TAKE BOB WILLIS
AND THE TEXAS PLAYBOYS,

THERE'S A STRIDE PIANO.

THEY HAVE A CALL AND RESPONSE.

THE SOLO IS LIKE
A JAZZ SOLO ON TOP OF IT;

THE ORGANIZATION IS LIKE
A JUMP BAND,

THOSE 1930s KIND OF
JAZZ SWING BANDS.

YOU HAVE SOME TYPE
OF SWING RHYTHM.

[IMITATING SWING RHYTHM]

THEN YOU CAN HAVE SOMEBODY
SOLOING ON THAT FORM.

I MEAN, IT'S WHAT...
IT'S OUR--IT'S OUR WAY.

LOUIS ARMSTRONG ON RECORDS
WOULD ALWAYS SAY,

"OH, PLAY THAT THING,
MR. JOHNNY ST. CYR,"

AND IT'S--LOUIS ARMSTRONG
DIDN'T INVENT IT,

BUT IT'S PART OF A KIND OF
SOUTHERN TRADITION OF A SELF--

"THIS IS SO AND SO
PLAYING THIS INSTRUMENT."

AND BOB WILLS WAS DEFINITELY
LIKE THAT, A SHOWMAN.

BENSON: HIS INTERJECTIONS,
WHETHER THEY WERE

HOLLERS OR HARMONIES
OR JUST TALKING,

WAS WHAT BROUGHT PEOPLE
TO BOB WILLS.

HE DEMANDED, AND HE GOT,

THE GREATEST MUSICIANS
OF THE ERA PLAYING FOR HIM.

BUT SOMETIMES,
THE GENERAL PUBLIC, UH,

DOES NOT HONE IN
ON THE INTRICACIES

OR THE, UH, THE LITTLE THINGS
THAT MAKE GREAT MUSICIANS GREAT.

BUT THEY SAW THIS GUY HAVING
AN INCREDIBLE TIME ONSTAGE,

HOLLERING AND CARRYING ON,
AND WENT,

"WOW! WE LOVE THIS GUY,"
AND YOU'LL NEVER FORGET HIM.

NARRATOR: BY THE LATE 1930s,
WILLS WAS A CELEBRITY

THROUGHOUT THE SOUTHWEST.

HE PERSUADED A SUBSIDIARY
OF GENERAL MILLS

TO PRODUCE PLAY BOY FLOUR,

GIVING HIM A ROYALTY
FOR EVERY SACK IT SOLD.

MEANWHILE, HE KEPT THE BAND
ON THE ROAD 4 NIGHTS A WEEK,

WITH 6 RADIO BROADCASTS
EACH MORNING,

AND TWO NIGHTS AT
TULSA'S CAIN'S BALLROOM,

WHERE 1,500 FANS REGULARLY
CAME TO DANCE TO HIS MUSIC.

BOB WILLIS,
WHEN HE HIT THAT STAGE,

HE WAS SERIOUS
AS A HEART ATTACK.

HE WAS THERE TO PLAY
SOME MUSIC FOR YOU.

WILLIS: "OH, LIZA,
PULL YOUR SHADES DOWN"

NARRATOR: TO KEEP THE CROWD
ON THEIR FEET,

HE NEVER CALLED FOR
AN INTERMISSION--

JUST LET SOME MUSICIANS REST

WHILE THE OTHERS
CONTINUED PLAYING.

TO KEEP HIS MUSICIANS
ON THEIR TOES,

WITHOUT WARNING
HE WOULD NOD TO ONE--

OR DIP HIS FIDDLE BOW AT THEM--

TO TAKE THE NEXT
INSTRUMENTAL BREAK

WHILE HE STRUTTED
AROUND THE STAGE.

BENSON: BOB WILLIS
WAS LIKE ELVIS PRESLEY.

HE WAS OUTRAGEOUS.

HE WAS A COLORFUL FIGURE,
A LA MICK JAGGER.

HE PRANCED AROUND ONSTAGE
LIKE A PEACOCK.

WILLIS: "...EVERYBODY DANCE
AND...YEAH, IS EVERYBODY..."

BENSON: I GOT TO KNOW
A LOT OF THE OLD TEXAS PLAYBOYS,

AND ONE THING THEY SAID
TO ME, ALL OF THEM,

WAS THAT WHEN THEY GOT
ONSTAGE WITH BOB WILLS,

HE MOTIVATED THEM TO
PLAY ABOVE WHAT THEY COULD.

I SAID, "WELL, WHY WAS THAT?"

HE SAID, "WELL, HE HAD THESE
BURNING BLACK EYES

"AND THIS LOOK THAT
WHEN HE LOOKED AT YOU,

YOU WENT, 'OH, MY GOD,
I BETTER DO SOMETHING.'"

WILLS: LIZA, YOU CAN LET
THEM SHADES UP NOW.

âa AW, EVERYBODY
DANCE NOW... âa

NARRATOR: BUT WILLS
WAS A BINGE DRINKER

WHO SOMETIMES MISSED ENGAGEMENTS
IF HE WENT ON A BENDER.

HIS AFFAIRS WITH WOMEN BROUGHT
HIM 5 DIVORCES IN 6 YEARS,

AND HE STRUGGLED
WITH OCCASIONAL DEPRESSIONS.

"THE ONLY TIME WE
EVER PLAYED SAD SONGS,"

ONE BAND MEMBER SAID, "WAS WHEN
BOB WAS BETWEEN MARRIAGES."

BUT NOTHING SEEMED
TO DAMPEN HIS GROWING
POPULARITY.

WILLS CONTINUED
TO INNOVATE.

BESIDES INTRODUCING DRUMS
TO HILLBILLY MUSIC,

HE ENCOURAGED HIS STEEL GUITAR
PLAYER LEON McAULIFFE

TO ADOPT A TECHNIQUE
OTHER MUSICIANS WERE
EXPERIMENTING WITH,

HOOKING HIS INSTRUMENT
TO AN AMPLIFIER,

CREATING A WHOLE
NEW SOUND.

FOR MANY PEOPLE,
THE ELECTRIC STEEL GUITAR

WOULD BECOME AS
CLOSELY ASSOCIATED

WITH COUNTRY MUSIC
AS THE FIDDLE.

WILLS: "DOMINO

[STEEL GUITAR PLAYING]

NARRATOR: IN 1938, WILLS
RECORDED A SONG HE HAD WRITTEN,

ADAPTED FROM HIS EARLIER TUNE,
"SPANISH TWO STEP."

HE CALLED THIS ONE
"SAN ANTONIO ROSE."

IT BECAME THE MOST POPULAR
HILLBILLY RECORD OF 1939.

BENSON: "SAN ANTONIO ROSE"
IS A FIDDLE TUNE.

IT STARTED OUT,
AND HE RECORDED IT,

NO WORDS, NO MUSIC,
JUST FIDDLES.

HIS PUBLISHER AT
THE TIME WAS THE IRVING
BERLIN MUSIC COMPANY.

AND THEY SAID,
"HEY, WE THINK THIS
COULD BE A BIG HIT.

WE'RE GOING TO HAVE OUR
WRITER WRITE THE WORDS."

WILLS: "UH-HUH

NARRATOR: WILLS COULDN'T
STAND THE NEW LYRICS

OR THE NEW ARRANGEMENT
IRVING BERLIN'S PEOPLE
HAD PROVIDED.

WHEN HIS BAND PLAYED IT,
HE COMPLAINED,

"THE AUDIENCE DIDN'T THINK
IT SOUNDED AUTHENTIC."

BENSON: HE GAVE
ONE OF HIS HORN PLAYERS

A JUG OF WHISKEY
AND 5 BUCKS.

HE SAID, "GO WRITE WORDS."

WILLS: â DEEP WITHIN MY HEART
LIES A MELODY... â

BENSON: AND HE WRITES,
â DEEP WITHIN MY HEART
LIES A MELODY â

â A SONG OF OLD SAN ANTONE

AND THEY LOVE IT.

NARRATOR: THE SONG,
CALLED "NEW SAN ANTONIO ROSE,"

WAS AN INSTANT HIT.

A YEAR LATER, BING CROSBY
WOULD RECORD HIS OWN VERSION,

WHICH SOLD 1.5
MILLION RECORDS.

"I WENT," BOB WILLS SAID,
"FROM HAMBURGERS TO STEAKS."

NELSON: EARLY IN MY LIFE,
I WAS A YOUNG PROMOTER.

I WAS PUTTING
TOGETHER SHOWS.

I WOULD HIRE ARTISTS
AND HOPE I GOT ENOUGH MONEY

THROUGH THE DOOR

TO PAY THEM.

BOB WILLS, I HIRED FOR \$750
TO PLAY OVER IN WHITNEY, TEXAS.

I HAULED A PIANO ON
THE BACK OF A PICKUP OVER,

SO THAT HIS BAND
COULD HAVE A PIANO.

I MANAGED TO TAKE IN
ENOUGH MONEY AND PAY HIM.

BUT I WAS ONLY LIKE
14, 15 YEARS OLD.

AND I GOT UP TO SING
WITH BOB WILLS,

SO IT WAS AS
GOOD AS IT GETS.

WILLS: "ALL TOGETHER NOW

NARRATOR: IN 1969,
ASTRONAUT PETE CONRAD

WOULD BRING A TAPE OF
"NEW SAN ANTONIO ROSE"

ON THE APOLLO 12
MOON MISSION.

WITH A WORLDWIDE AUDIENCE
LISTENING FAR BELOW,

THE SONG WAS BEAMED TO
EVERYONE ON THE PLANET.

WILLS: "WELL, ALL RIGHT

ROOSEVELT: WE ARE DEFINITELY
IN AN ERA OF BUILDING TODAY,

THE BEST KIND OF BUILDING,

THE BUILDING OF GREAT
PUBLIC PROJECTS

FOR THE BENEFIT
OF THE PUBLIC

AND WITH THE DEFINITE
OBJECTIVE OF BUILDING

HUMAN HAPPINESS AT

THE SAME TIME.

[ALL CHEERING]

NARRATOR: FOR EDWIN CRAIG
AND THE NATIONAL LIFE

AND ACCIDENT INSURANCE
COMPANY IN NASHVILLE,

THE DEPRESSION PROVED TO BE
A TIME OF OPPORTUNITY.

WHEN THEIR RADIO
STATION, WSM,

WAS GRANTED A FEDERAL LICENSE
TO BECOME ONE OF ONLY 3

50,000-WATT CLEAR CHANNEL
STATIONS IN THE SOUTH,

CRAIG SPENT A QUARTER
OF A MILLION DOLLARS

TO ERECT A NEW
TRANSMITTING TOWER,

THE TALLEST OF ITS KIND
IN THE NATION.

CHORUS: â WSM

WOMAN: â AHA

NARRATOR: IT COULD BEAM
WSM PROGRAMS,

ND THE COMPANY'S NAME
AND ITS SLOGAN,

"WE SHIELD MILLIONS,"
FROM COAST TO COAST.

[APPLAUSE]

WOMAN: I HAD A HARD LIFE.

I CHOPPED CORN
AND I PICKED COTTON.

BUT EVERY SATURDAY NIGHT,
WE'D TAKE AN HOUR OFF

AND TURN ON AN OLD RADIO AND
LISTEN TO THE GRAND OLE OPRY.

[INDISTINCT SINGING]

THAT'S HOW I COME
ABOUT THE COUNTRY MUSIC,

AND LOVED THE SOUNDS THAT
COME OUT OF THAT RADIO.

HAY: AND NOW, FRIENDS,
WE PRESENT UNCLE DAVE MACON...

NARRATOR: WSM's
SATURDAY NIGHT SHOW,
THE GRAND OLE OPRY,

WAS STILL HOSTED BY
THE AMIABLE GEORGE HAY,

THE SOLEMN OLD JUDGE.

HAY: LET 'ER GO,
UNCLE DAVE.

NARRATOR: UNCLE DAVE MACON
AND HIS BANJO

STILL ANCHORED THE
CAST OF MUSICIANS,

MOST OF THEM DRESSED LIKE
CARICATURES OF HILLBILLIES

AND PLAYING IN STRING BANDS
WITH NAMES HAY HAD GIVEN THEM--

THE GULLY JUMPERS,
THE POSSUM HUNTERS,
THE FRUIT JAR DRINKERS.

NASHVILLE'S UPPER CRUST
STILL CONSIDERED IT

AN EMBARRASSMENT TO
THE CITY'S IMAGE.

WHEN EDWIN CRAIG'S
WEALTHY FRIENDS

IN THE FASHIONABLE
BELLE MEADE NEIGHBORHOOD

COMPLAINED THAT WSM
PRE-EMPTED THE BROADCASTS

OF ARTURO TOSCANINI
AND THE NBC SYMPHONY

WITH THE GRAND OLE OPRY
ON SATURDAY NIGHTS,

HE MOLLIFIED THEM BY
ARRANGING FOR THE SYMPHONY

TO BE CARRIED ON A SMALLER,
1,000-WATT SIGNAL

THAT BECAME THE FIRST COMMERCIAL
F.M. STATION IN AMERICA.

AND WHEN HIS
FAR-FLUNG SALES FORCE

REPORTED A 30% INCREASE
IN POLICIES,

CRAIG KNEW PEOPLE
WERE LISTENING TO,

AND LOVING, THE HILLBILLY
MUSIC HE WAS BROADCASTING,

TIMED AROUND THE SCHEDULES
OF WORKING PEOPLE.

MAN: "FROM WAY DOWN IN
THE CANNON..."

MAN: I HAD MY MOTHER
GET ME UP IN THE MIDDLE

OF THE NIGHT, PRACTICALLY,
AND I WAS 4 YEARS OLD,

AND WHEN SHE'D START FIXING
MY FATHER'S BREAKFAST

BEFORE HE WENT OFF TO WORK.

WORKED IN A BRICK PLANT,
WHICH WAS THE MAJOR INDUSTRY

IN OLIVE HILL, KENTUCKY.

THEY HAD MORNING
RADIO SHOWS.

THEY'D COME OUT TO
WSM EARLY IN THE MORNING

BEFORE CIVILIZED SOCIETY
WOKE UP,

AND THEY'D PLAY--ON WSM,
THEY'D PLAY COUNTRY MUSIC

UNTIL BELLE MEADE WOKE UP,

AND THEN THEY'D GO BACK TO,
YOU KNOW, CIVILIZED MUSIC.

NARRATOR: SO MANY FANS OF
THE GRAND OLE OPRY WERE JAMMING

INTO WSM's STUDIO ON
THE FIFTH FLOOR OF THE
INSURANCE BUILDING,

IT WAS CLEAR THE OPRY
HAD TO MOVE.

THEY TRIED 4 DIFFERENT
VENUES IN NASHVILLE.

EACH WOULD PROVE
UNSATISFACTORY.

EVENTUALLY, THEY WOULD
MOVE TO A LOCATION DOWNTOWN
ON FIFTH AVENUE.

IT WAS AN IMPOSING TABERNACLE
BUILT IN 1892 BY THOMAS RYMAN,

A WAYWARD RIVERBOAT MAGNATE

WHO HAD UNDERGONE
A RELIGIOUS CONVERSION

AND WANTED A PLACE HE
CALLED, "PURELY AN OUTPOST
TO CATCH SINNERS."

IT SEATED MORE THAN
3,000 PEOPLE,

WITH LONG PEWS ON THE FLOOR

AND A SPACIOUS BALCONY,
THE CONFEDERATE GALLERY,

BUILT TO ACCOMMODATE A REUNION
OF SOUTHERN SOLDIERS.

IT HAD HOSTED SYMPHONIES,
BALLETS, THEATER,

AND THE FISK JUBILEE SINGERS,

AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN
GOSPEL CHOIR.

ENRICO CARUSO
AND MARIAN ANDERSON
HAD PERFORMED THERE.

PRESIDENT THEODORE ROOSEVELT
AND BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

HAD SPOKEN FROM
ITS STAGE.

ITS ACOUSTICS WERE UNMATCHED,

"LIKE BEING INSIDE
AN OLD VIOLIN,

SURROUNDED BY GOOD,
SEASONED WOOD,"

ONE PERFORMER SAID, WHEN
THE GRAND OLE OPRY MOVED IN.

THEY WERE HOME.

DELMORE BROTHERS:
â€” I'VE GOT THE BLUES

â€” I'VE GOT THE BLUES,
OL' NASHVILLE BLUES â€”

NARRATOR:
IN THE EARLY YEARS,

MANY OF THE OPRY'S STARS
HAD BEEN SEMI-PROFESSIONALS,

SUPPORTING THEMSELVES WITH
REGULAR JOBS DURING THE WEEK.

MAN: THEY WOULD COME IN
ON SATURDAY NIGHTS AND WORK
AT THE RADIO STATION.

THEY MAY HAVE BEEN
A FARMER,

THEY MAY HAVE BEEN A BLACKSMITH,
PERHAPS A DOCTOR.

THEY HAD MANY
DIFFERENT VOCATIONS.

THEY WERE NOT FULL-TIME
PROFESSIONAL RECORDING ARTISTS

OR TOURING MUSICIANS.

THAT CHANGED WHEN

THE DELMORE BROTHERS,
ALTON AND RABON,

CAME TO THE FOREFRONT
IN NASHVILLE.

NARRATOR: THE DELMORE
BROTHERS, WITH
THEIR SWEET HARMONIES,

WERE PAID \$5.00
PER BROADCAST,

AND THEY, LIKE ALL
THE OTHER ARTISTS,

WERE REQUIRED TO BE ON STAGE AT
THE OPRY EVERY SATURDAY NIGHT.

THE REST OF THE WEEK,
THEY COULD DRIVE TO
BETTER-PAYING GIGS,

AS LONG AS THEY WERE BACK IN
NASHVILLE BY SHOW TIME.

DELMORE BROTHERS:
"COME BACK AGAIN
SOME OTHER DAY"

NARRATOR: THE DELMORES
WENT ON THE ROAD

WITH ONE OF THE SHOW'S
ORIGINAL HEADLINERS

AND ITS ONLY AFRICAN
AMERICAN, DEFORD BAILEY.

TRAVELING THE
SEGREGATED SOUTH,

BAILEY AND THE DELMORES
DEVELOPED A CLOSE FRIENDSHIP.

"THEY'D STICK BY ME
THROUGH THICK AND THIN,"
BAILEY REMEMBERED,

INCLUDING AT RESTAURANTS
THAT REFUSED TO SERVE HIM.

"IF YOU CAN'T FEED DEFORD,"
THE DELMORES RESPONDED,

WE CAN'T EAT HERE, EITHER."

"IF THE PLACE WOULDN'T
LET ME COME IN AT ALL,"
BAILEY SAID,

"THEY'D DRIVE DOWN THE
ROAD 50 MILES OR MORE

TO FIND ANOTHER PLACE
THAT WOULD."

WOMAN: AND THIS WAS
A PROUD BLACK MAN.

IT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN EASY
TO STAND ON THAT STAGE.

AND IT IS
AN INTERESTING PLACE

WHERE YOU'RE
STANDING AS AN EQUAL

AT A TIME WHEN THERE
WERE VERY FEW SPACES

WHERE BLACK PEOPLE COULD
STAND AS EQUALS TO WHITES.

â^a

â^a

MAN: THANK YOU, BOYS. OK...

NARRATOR: IN 1937, JULIUS
FRANK ANTHONY KUCZYNSKI
JOINED THE OPRY.

BORN IN MILWAUKEE, HE
HAD GROWN UP PLAYING POLKA
MUSIC ON HIS ACCORDION.

HE FORMED THE GOLDEN
WEST COWBOYS

AND CHANGED HIS NAME
TO PEE WEE KING.

FROM THE MOMENT HE
ARRIVED IN NASHVILLE,

HE ALSO BEGAN
TO CHANGE THE OPRY,

BRINGING DRUMS AND ELECTRIC
GUITARS TO ITS STAGE,

INSISTING THAT THE MUSICIANS
BE ALLOWED TO JOIN A UNION,

AND IN 1938, HE WAS
RESPONSIBLE FOR THE
BIGGEST CHANGE OF ALL--

RECRUITING AN ARTIST WHO
WOULD GO ON TO PERSONIFY

THE GRAND OLE OPRY
FOR GENERATIONS.

ROY CLAXTON ACUFF
WAS BORN IN 1903

IN MAYNARDVILLE,
TENNESSEE,

ABOUT 25 MILES NORTH
OF KNOXVILLE.

HIS FATHER, A PART-TIME LAWYER
AND BAPTIST MINISTER,

WAS A GOOD COUNTRY FIDDLER.

HIS MOTHER PLAYED PIANO
AND GUITAR.

THOUGH HE SANG
IN CHURCH CHOIRS

AND AT HIS SCHOOL'S
MORNING CHAPEL SERVICES,

ROY SEEMED MORE INTERESTED
IN BASEBALL THAN MUSIC.

A CAREER WITH THE
NEW YORK YANKEES SEEMED
WITHIN REACH,

BUT WHEN A NEAR-FATAL CASE OF
SUNSTROKE RUINED HIS CHANCES,

HE TURNED TO MUSIC INSTEAD

AND TOOK UP THE FIDDLE.

HE SPENT A SUMMER
TOURING EAST TENNESSEE
WITH A MEDICINE SHOW.

"I GOT A PRETTY GOOD
BACKGROUND IN SHOW BUSINESS,"

ACUFF SAID OF
THE EXPERIENCE.

"YOU SANG TO SEVERAL
THOUSAND PEOPLE IN THE OPEN,

"AND YOU COULDN'T GET TO
THEM IF YOU DIDN'T

PUT YOUR LUNGS TO
THE FULLEST TEST."

MAN: HE BEGINS TO PLAY
A LITTLE BIT OF MUSIC

AND FORMS
THE CRAZY TENNESSEANS,

WHO ARE JUST A--AS THE NAME
IMPLIES, A WILD BUNCH.

YOU KNOW, THEY
BLACK OUT THEIR TEETH.

THEY SIT ON HAY BALES.

THEY WEAR SUSPENDERS.

THEY REALLY DRESS THE PART,

AND THEY REALLY
BECOME HILLBILLIES.

NARRATOR: BY 1938,
THE CRAZY TENNESSEANS

WERE APPEARING ON
KNOXVILLE RADIO SHOWS.

IT WAS THERE THAT
PEE WEE KING HEARD ACUFF

AND ARRANGED FOR AN ON-AIR
AUDITION AT THE GRAND OLE OPRY.

ACUFF: "WHAT A BEAUTIFUL
THOUGHT I AM THINKING

"CONCERNING A GREAT
SPECKLED BIRD..."

NARRATOR: ACUFF WAS NERVOUS AT
THE START OF THE PERFORMANCE.

HIS KNEES SHOOK.

ACUFF: "IS RECORDED..."

NARRATOR: BUT AFTER A LILTING
DOBRO INTRODUCTION,

HE LAUNCHED INTO
"THE GREAT SPECKLED BIRD,"

A RELIGIOUS SONG WITH LYRICS
BASED ON A PASSAGE

FROM THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

AND A MELODY TAKEN FROM
THE CARTER FAMILY SONG,

"I'M THINKING TONIGHT OF
MY BLUE EYES."

ACUFF: "THEY WATCH
EVERY MOVE..."

NARRATOR: AT THE MICROPHONE
THAT NIGHT,

ACUFF SOLD THE SONG
TO HIS AUDIENCE.

ACUFF: "THEY LONG
TO FIND FAULT"

"WITH HER TEACHING

"BUT REALLY THEY FIND
NO MISTAKES"

MAN: HE WAS SO SPECIAL.

HE HAD A WAY
OF TOUCHING PEOPLE.

ROY ACUFF WAS NOT
THE GREATEST SINGER

THAT EVER CAME
DOWN THE PIKE,

BUT HE WAS A
MARVELOUS COMMUNICATOR.

HE COULD COMMUNICATE
THOSE FEELINGS.

WHEN HE SANG
"THE GREAT SPECKLED BIRD,"

YOU BELIEVED IT.

YOU ABSOLUTELY
BELIEVED IT.

ACUFF: "I AM GLAD I HAVE
LEARNED OF HER MEEKNESS"

NARRATOR: THIS WAS NOT
A STRING BAND WITH A SINGER,

IT WAS A SINGER
WITH A STRING BAND,

AND WSM OFFICIALS WERE
UNSURE ABOUT HIS PERFORMANCE

UNTIL THEIR MAIL
CLERK ASKED,

"WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO
ABOUT ALL THESE LETTERS

ABOUT SOMETHING TO DO
WITH A BIRD?"

WITH A REGULAR SPOT
ON THE SHOW

AND HIS BAND, NOW CALLED
THE SMOKY MOUNTAIN BOYS,

ACUFF QUICKLY BECAME
THE OPRY'S BIGGEST STAR,

BELOVED FOR HIS
WILLINGNESS

TO PUT EVERYTHING
INTO HIS SONGS,

SOMETIMES EVEN
CRYING ON STAGE.

LISTENING TO HIM ONE NIGHT
IN MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA,

A YOUNG HANK WILLIAMS
WAS STRUCK BY ACUFF'S
PALPABLE SINCERITY.

"FOR DRAWING POWER
IN THE SOUTH,"

WILLIAMS REMEMBERED,
"IT WAS ROY ACUFF,
THEN GOD."

SECOR: HE'S IN

A HILLBILLY STRING BAND.

AND IN A HILLBILLY STRING BAND,
THERE'S NO HIERARCHY.

THE FIDDLE
PLAYS ALL THE TIME.

THE HARMONICA MIGHT
PLAY ALL THE TIME.

THE JUG MIGHT
BLOW ALL THE TIME.

THERE'S NOT EVEN SOLOS IN
HILLBILLY STRING BAND MUSIC.

NOBODY--NOBODY STEPS OUT.

BUT THE OPRY WAS
READY FOR A NEW ERA

IN WHICH THE STAR
NOT ONLY STOOD OUT,

BUT HE SOLD HIS
OWN SONG BOOKS,

HE HAD HIS
FACE ON THE RECORD.

THINGS WERE CHANGING.

MAN: WHILE EVERYBODY
ELSE WAS DONNING COWBOY HATS

AND COWBOY BOOTS
AND ADOPTING COWBOY MONIKERS,

HE STUCK TO THE OLD STYLE.

ACUFF: " FROM THE GREAT
ATLANTIC OCEAN... "

MALONE: AND SANG OLD-TIME
SONGS THAT HAD BEEN AROUND,

OR AT LEAST SOUNDED LIKE

THEY HAD BEEN AROUND,
FOR GENERATIONS.

ACUFF: " TO THE SOUTH BELL
BY THE SHORE... "

NARRATOR: IN 1939,
WHEN THE R.J. REYNOLDS

TOBACCO COMPANY

OFFERED TO SPONSOR A
HALF-HOUR PORTION OF
THE GRAND OLE OPRY

TO BE CARRIED NATIONALLY
OVER THE NBC RADIO NETWORK,

THERE WAS NO QUESTION
WHO WOULD BE THE MAIN
ATTRACTION.

BENSON: ONE TIME I WAS SITTING
AT THE OPRY WITH ROY ACUFF.

ROY SAID, "YOU KNOW,
THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
ME AND BOB WILLS

"WAS THAT I PLAYED
SCHOOLHOUSES, CHURCHES,
TENT MEETINGS,

AND BOB PLAYED DANCES."

IT WAS
A CULTURAL DIFFERENCE.

THE SOUTH WAS
THE BIBLE BELT.

BAPTIST AND RELIGIOUS PEOPLE
DID NOT ALLOW DRINKING,

AND, OF COURSE,
DANCING WAS A SIN.

THERE'S THAT GREAT JOKE,
YOU KNOW,

WHY DON'T BAPTISTS
MAKE LOVE STANDING UP?

BECAUSE PEOPLE WILL
THINK THEY'RE DANCING.

YOU KNOW?
[CHUCKLES]

MONROE BROTHERS:
â OH, WE'RE AS OLD

â AS COMING A DAY...

NARRATOR: ALONG WITH
THE DELMORE BROTHERS,

THE 1930s WITNESSED AN
EXPLOSION OF BROTHER ACTS
IN HILLBILLY MUSIC.

THERE WAS SOUTH CAROLINA'S
HARD-CHARGING DIXON BROTHERS,

NORTH CAROLINA'S
CALLAHAN BROTHERS,

WHO MIXED BLUES WITH GOSPEL,

AND THE BOLICK BROTHERS, WHO
PERFORMED AS THE BLUE SKY BOYS.

BUT FEW OTHER DUOS BUILT
A LARGER AUDIENCE

THAN THE MONROE BROTHERS
FROM ROSINE, KENTUCKY.

CHARLIE PLAYED GUITAR
AND SANG LEAD,

WITH BILL PROVIDING
A HIGH HARMONY

WHILE DRIVING THE BEAT WITH
FURIOUS RUNS ON HIS MANDOLIN.

WOMAN: I WAS 4.

AND EVERYBODY FROM
THE NEIGHBORHOOD

WENT TO CHERRY GROVE SCHOOL TO
SEE BILL AND CHARLIE MONROE.

AND WHAT I RECOLLECT ABOUT IT
WAS I WAS A LITTLE GIRL

SITTING IN MAMA'S LAP
AND SEEING THEM WHITE HATS.

I THOUGHT THAT WAS POWERFUL,
EVEN AT 4 YEARS OLD.

NARRATOR: OF THE TWO,
BILL MONROE WAS THE MORE

UNLIKELY TO BECOME
A PUBLIC PERFORMER.

HE HAD BEEN BORN
WITH ONE CROOKED EYE,

WHICH MADE HIM THE BUTT
OF CONSTANT TEASING.

SMITH: PEOPLE THOUGHT
THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING
WRONG WITH HIM.

COUNTRY PEOPLE CAN
BE SO CRUEL.

THE STAGECOACH WOULD
STOP THERE IN KENTUCKY
WHERE THEY LIVED,

BILL WOULD RUN OUT
TO THE BARN SO THEY
WOULD NOT SEE HIM

BECAUSE THEY WOULD
ALWAYS MAKE FUN OF HIM.

"LOOK AT THAT LITTLE BOY,"
WHICH IS BAD.

I MEAN, CAN YOU IMAGINE?

AND THAT'S HOW
HE WAS TREATED.

AND THAT CERTAINLY,
I THINK,

WAS A LARGE CAUSE OF
HIM GOING TO MAKE IT

AND BE ON HIS OWN

AND HIM BEING RIGHT,
NO MATTER WHAT,

BECAUSE HE WAS SO
WRONG WHEN HE WAS LITTLE.

HE WAS SO WRONG AS FAR AS
HIS FAMILY WAS CONCERNED.

HE WAS SO WRONG AS FAR AS
HIS BROTHERS WAS CONCERNED

AND HIS SISTERS.

NARRATOR: HIS LIFE BECAME
EVEN LONELIER AT AGE 10

WHEN HIS MOTHER DIED.

BILL SOUGHT SOLACE

WALKING IN THE WOODS,

AND WHERE NO ONE ELSE
COULD HEAR HIM,

SINGING THE SONGS
SHE HAD TAUGHT HIM.

HIS UNCLE PEN,
AN ACCOMPLISHED FIDDLER,

TOOK THE BOY
UNDER HIS WING,

BRINGING HIM ALONG TO
LOCAL SQUARE DANCES

AND EVENTUALLY LETTING HIM
PLAY BACKUP ON THE GUITAR.

MONROE GOT TO KNOW
ARNOLD SHULTZ,

A GIFTED GUITARIST AND FIDDLER,
WHO INCULCATED THE BOY

WITH AN APPRECIATION
FOR THE BLUES.

SECOR: I WOULD SAY AT LEAST
HALF OF THESE ARTISTS

IN THE EARLY DAYS OF
COUNTRY MUSIC

HAD THAT SAME ENCOUNTER

IN WHICH THEY MET
A BLACK SONGSTER

AND THOUGHT, "I KNOW
WHAT I WANT TO DO,"

AND THE TORCH WAS PASSED.

NARRATOR: MONROE QUIT
SCHOOL AFTER THE FIFTH GRADE

TO HELP SUPPORT THE FAMILY,

SOMETHING THAT BECAME
EVEN MORE IMPORTANT

WHEN HIS FATHER ALSO DIED.

YOU'VE GOT TO REALIZE
THAT BILL MONROE CAME UP--

HE WAS BORN IN 1911, HE
CAME UP DURING THE DEPRESSION.

HE SAW THE HARD TIMES.

HE KNEW WHAT IT WAS
LIKE TO, YOU KNOW,

TO WORK HARD ALL DAY LONG.

HE USED TO TELL ME ABOUT
CUTTING TIMBER HIMSELF,

FALLING THESE TREES HIMSELF,

ROLLING THEM DOWN
THE HILL HIMSELF,

ONTO A WAGON, AND TAKING
THEM INTO TOWN.

AND HE SAID, "YOU KNOW,
WHEN I'D GET IN CLOSE
TO TOWN, INTO ROSINE,"

HE SAID, "I'D STAND UP WHERE
EVERYBODY COULD SEE ME,

'CAUSE I'D REALLY
WORKED HARD."

AND THAT WAS HIS IDENTITY.

NARRATOR: BY THE EARLY
1930s, HE HAD GROWN INTO
A STRAPPING YOUNG MAN.

HIS BAD EYE
HAD BEEN CORRECTED,

AND LIKE SO MANY OTHER
RURAL SOUTHERNERS

SEEKING EMPLOYMENT
IN THE DEPRESSION,

HE HAD MOVED NORTH, JOINING
CHARLIE AND ANOTHER BROTHER

WORKING FOR THE SINCLAIR OIL
COMPANY NEAR CHICAGO.

THEY EARNED SOME EXTRA
MONEY AS SQUARE DANCERS

FOR THE NATIONAL

BARN DANCE,

BUT BEFORE LONG,
CHARLIE AND BILL SET OUT
ON A CAREER AS A DUO,

PLAYING THE MIDWEST
AND THE CAROLINAS.

THEY WERE DOING WELL IN 1938,
BASED AT RALEIGH'S WPTF.

BUT BOTH MONROE BROTHERS WERE
STUBBORN AND COMPETITIVE--

BILL WAS ESPECIALLY PRICKLY--

AND THEY ARGUED
CONSTANTLY ABOUT THE
DIRECTION OF THEIR MUSIC.

ONE DAY, CHARLIE ABRUPTLY
QUIT AND LEFT TOWN.

HE FORMED HIS OWN BAND,

AND LANDED A SPOT ON WWVA's
POPULAR WHEELING JAMBOREE.

BILL WENT TO A SMALLER STATION
IN GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA,

AND WITH 3 OTHER MUSICIANS
FORMED THE BLUE GRASS BOYS,

NAMED IN HONOR OF HIS
HOME STATE OF KENTUCKY.

WITH THEM HE
BEGAN EXPERIMENTING--

SONGS PLAYED IN HIGHER KEYS
FOR WHAT HE CALLED

A "HIGH, LONESOME SOUND,"
TINGED WITH THE BLUES.

IN 1939, BOTH BROTHERS SET
THEIR SIGHTS ON NASHVILLE

AND THE GRAND OLE OPRY,

WHICH WAS NOW RIVALING
CHICAGO'S NATIONAL BARN DANCE

AS THE PREMIER SHOWCASE
FOR HILLBILLY MUSIC,

AND THEY EACH WANTED
TO BE PART OF IT.

HOST: HERE'S A HOT ONE,
THE NEW SKINNER BLUES...

NARRATOR: BILL GOT
TO NASHVILLE FIRST

AND WAS GIVEN A GUEST SLOT ON
THE OCTOBER 28th BROADCAST.

MONROE: "GOOD MORNING,
CAPTAIN "

"GOOD MORNING, SIR...

NARRATOR: WHEN THEY WALKED
ON STAGE THAT NIGHT,

BILL MONROE AND
HIS BLUE GRASS BOYS

DIDN'T LOOK LIKE ANY
OF THE OTHER OPRY ACTS.

BILL DETESTED THE WAY
JUDGE HAY HAD PERFORMERS
COSTUMED LIKE COUNTRY RUBES

AND INSTEAD DRESSED HIMSELF
AND HIS BAND MEMBERS

IN HIGH-TOP BOOTS,
RIDING PANTS,
AND CRISP SHIRTS.

MONROE: "I CAN PUT
MY INITIALS "

"ON A MILL
ANY OLD TIME... "

NARRATOR: AS THEY BROKE INTO
THEIR OWN PROPULSIVE REWORKING

OF JIMMIE RODGERS' FAMOUS SONG,
"MULE SKINNER BLUES,"

IT BECAME IMMEDIATELY
CLEAR THEY DIDN'T

SOUND LIKE ANY OF
THE OTHER ACTS, EITHER.

[MONROE YODELING]

NARRATOR: "THOSE PEOPLE
COULDN'T EVEN THINK

AS FAST AS WE PLAYED,"

MONROE'S GUITARIST
CLEO DAVIS SAID.

"THERE WASN'T NOBODY
LIVING WHO HAD EVER PLAYED

WITH THE SPEED
THAT WE HAD."

MONROE: "WHAT DO YOU WANT ME
TO BRING YOU BACK?"

[CHEERS AND APPLAUSE]

NARRATOR: THE AUDIENCE BROUGHT
THEM BACK FOR 3 ENCORES.

MONROE: "AND IT GOT TO BE
CERTAIN TIMES"

STUART: I ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT
THE AUDIENCE HAS THE LAST VOTE.

AND THE AUDIENCE HEARD
SOMETHING IN THAT PERFORMANCE.

THEY HEARD SOMETHING IN HIM

AND THEY SAW SOMETHING IN
THAT MAN UP THERE ONSTAGE

THAT STEPPED
OUT OF KENTUCKY

WEARING HIGH-RIDING
BOOTS AND JODHPURS

AND LOOKING LIKE
A KENTUCKY GENTLEMAN
IN THAT HOMBURG HAT.

THEY SAW SOMETHING IN THAT
THAT THEY LIKED.

AND THEY WENT,
"WE'LL TAKE HIM."

MONROE: "YODEL-AY-WHO

HOO HOO!

NARRATOR: CHARLIE MONROE,
IN HIS DRESSING ROOM

IN WHEELING, WEST VIRGINIA,

HAPPENED TO HEAR HIS
BROTHER'S BROADCAST.

"HE WON'T LAST ON
THE OPRY," CHARLIE SCOFFED.

"WAIT TILL PEOPLE FIND
OUT HOW DIFFICULT HE IS
TO GET ALONG WITH."

HAY: BILL, THAT WAS REALLY
QUITE A MOMENT.

MAN: WOODY,
HOW YOU FEELING?

WOODY: FEELING RIGHT.

WELL, IF YOU AIN'T
RIGHT, GET RIGHT,

AND LET YOUR CONSCIENCE
BE YOUR GUIDE,

BECAUSE I'M GONNA PLAY
WITH MORE HEAVY ROW GENIUS,

COME TO FOLLOW,
DOUBLE FLAVOR, UNKNOWN
QUALITY THAN YOU DO.

MAKE IT LIGHT
ON YOURSELF.

[STEEL GUITAR PLAYING]

NARRATOR: ONE THING THAT
HADN'T CHANGED AT THE OPRY,

AND EVERY OTHER SHOW WHERE
HILLBILLY MUSIC WAS PLAYED,

WAS THE PRESENCE OF COMEDY,

INCLUDING DEGRADING
BLACKFACE ROUTINES

THAT PERSISTED LONG
AFTER THE TRAVELING
MINSTREL SHOW HAD DIED.

UNCLE DAVE MACON

WAS STILL THERE,

MAKING FUN OF HIS OWN
WEAKNESS FOR DRINK.

IN THE MIDDLE OF SONGS,

ROY ACUFF OFTEN BALANCED
HIS FIDDLE BOW,

AND SOMETIMES THE FIDDLE
ITSELF, ON HIS NOSE.

DAVE AKEMAN WAS
A SKILLED BANJO PLAYER,

BUT BECAME BETTER KNOWN
AS STRINGBEAN,

WHO DRESSED IN
A LOUD SHIRT AND PANTS

PULLED DOWN TO HIS KNEES
TO MAKE HIM LOOK LIKE
AN EXTREMELY TALL HAYSEED.

BUT THE MOST IMPROBABLE
AND ENDURING COMEDY STAR

OF THE GRAND OLE OPRY
WAS A COLLEGE-EDUCATED
ASPIRING ACTRESS

FROM A PROSPEROUS
TENNESSEE FAMILY

WHO JOINED THE CAST IN 1940.

HER REAL NAME
WAS SARAH OPHELIA COLLEY.

HER FANS WOULD KNOW HER
AS MINNIE PEARL.

SHE WAS BORN IN 1912
IN CENTERVILLE,

60 MILES SOUTHWEST
OF NASHVILLE,

AND NOTHING IN
SARAH COLLEY'S UPBRINGING

SEEMED DESTINED TO
PRODUCE THE CHARACTER

SHE BECAME ON

THE OPRY STAGE.

HER FATHER OWNED A SAWMILL,

AND THE HOME HE PROVIDED
FOR HIS FAMILY

HAD ONE OF THE TOWN'S
BEST LIBRARIES,

ITS FINEST CARRIAGE,

AND ONE OF ITS FIRST
AUTOMOBILES.

AS A YOUNG GIRL,
SHE BECAME SENSITIVE

THAT SHE WASN'T AS
PRETTY AS HER FRIENDS,

BUT SHE EXCELLED
IN ELOCUTION

AND DETERMINED TO BE
A GREAT ACTRESS.

SHE ENROLLED AT THE MOST
FASHIONABLE FINISHING SCHOOL

FOR YOUNG WOMEN IN
THE STATE, WARD-BELMONT,

LOCATED IN A FORMER PLANTATION
MANSION IN NASHVILLE,

WHERE SHE STUDIED
SHAKESPEARE.

AFTER GRADUATION,
COLLEY LANDED A JOB

WITH A THEATER COMPANY
IN ATLANTA,

WHICH WAS HELPING RURAL TOWNS
IN THE SOUTH STAGE PLAYS

AND VARIETY SHOWS
WITH HOMEGROWN TALENT.

ONE COLD WINTER NIGHT
IN JANUARY OF 1936,

SHE ARRIVED IN A LITTLE
VILLAGE NEAR SAND MOUNTAIN
IN NORTHERN ALABAMA.

SHE BOARDED
WITH A POOR FAMILY,

PRESIDED OVER BY A WOMAN
IN HER SEVENTIES

WHOSE YOUNGEST OF 16 CHILDREN
WAS SIMPLY CALLED BROTHER.

"WHEN I LEFT,"
COLLEY REMEMBERED,

"THE OLD LADY PAID ME THE
HIGHEST POSSIBLE COMPLIMENT.

"SHE SAID,
'&LORD A'MERCY, CHILD,

I HATE TO SEE YOU GO.
YOU'RE JUST LIKE ONE OF US.'"

SHE HAD BEEN COLLECTING
COUNTRY STORIES

AND ANECDOTES
AS SHE TRAVELED,

SLOWLY DEVELOPING
AN ALTER EGO SHE SOMETIMES
PORTRAYED FOR FRIENDS.

IT WAS THEN THAT COLLEY NAMED
HER CHARACTER MINNIE PEARL

AND OUTFITTED HER
WITH CLOTHES SHE PURCHASED

FOR LESS THAN \$10
AT A SECOND-HAND STORE--

A PAIR OF SIMPLE BLACK SHOES
WITH LOW HEELS AND ONE STRAP,

WHITE STOCKINGS, A PLAIN,
ROUND-COLLARED DRESS,

AND A CHEAP STRAW HAT,

TOPPED OFF WITH SOME
DIME-STORE FLOWERS.

WHILE MANY HILLBILLY COMICS
PAINTED ON FRECKLES

AND BLACKENED SOME
OF THEIR TEETH,

COLLEY DIDN'T SEE HER
MINNIE PEARL THAT WAY.

"I NEVER INTENDED HER TO BE
A CARICATURE," SHE SAID.

"I DRESSED HER AS I THOUGHT
A YOUNG COUNTRY GIRL

"WOULD DRESS TO GO
TO MEETIN' ON SUNDAY

"OR TO COME TO TOWN
ON SATURDAY AFTERNOON

TO DO A LITTLE SHOPPING
AND A LITTLE FLIRTING."

SHE CREATED A HOMETOWN
FOR HER CHARACTER--

TINY GRINDER'S SWITCH,

AND THEN POPULATED IT, SHE SAID,
"WITH MY OWN PEOPLE,"

INCLUDING A CHARACTER
SHE CALLED BROTHER.

HAY: FROM NASHVILLE,
TENNESSEE, THE HEART...

NARRATOR:
IN 1940, AT AGE 28,

SHE GOT A CHANCE TO AUDITION
ON THE GRAND OLE OPRY.

AWARE OF HER
GENTEEL BACKGROUND,

"SOME WERE AFRAID," SHE SAID,
THAT "THE OPRY AUDIENCE

"WOULD FIND THAT OUT
AND SUSPECT I WAS A PHONY,

WOULD THINK I WAS PUTTING
DOWN COUNTRY PEOPLE."

JUST BEFORE
SHE WENT ON THE AIR,

JUDGE HAY THOUGHT
SHE LOOKED SCARED

AND GAVE HER WHAT
SHE LATER CALLED,

"THE VERY BEST ADVICE
ANY PERFORMER CAN GET."

"JUST LOVE THEM, HONEY,"
HE SAID,

"AND THEY'LL
LOVE YOU RIGHT BACK."

HAY: MINNIE PEARL!

PEARL: HOWDY!

AUDIENCE: HOWDY!

WOMAN: NOW, MINNIE PEARL
GRADUATED FROM WARD-BELMONT
JUNIOR COLLEGE,

SO SHE WAS A
SOPHISTICATED WOMAN.

AND SHE WORE A STRAW
HAT WITH A PRICE TAG
HANGING ON IT,

AND THE PRICE TAG WAS
LABELED SOMETHING LIKE

"TWO DOLLARS AND A HALF."

AND SHE'D STEP OUT
ON THE STAGE IN THE OPRY

AND SHE'D SAY, "HOWDY,"

AND THE AUDIENCE JUST
FELL OUT LAUGHING.

PEARL: THAT'S A BIG DUKE...

NARRATOR: MINNIE WOULD
THEN GIVE SOME NEWS
FROM GRINDER'S SWITCH

AND TALK ABOUT BROTHER,

AND AS SHE WOULD FOR
THE REST OF HER CAREER,

SHE POKED MOST OF HER
FUN AT HERSELF.

"WHEN I GOT HERE,

I FELT SO AT HOME,"

SHE JOKED
WITH THE AUDIENCE.

"IN FACT, ONE FELLER
TOLD ME I WAS

THE HOMELIEST GIRL
HE'D EVER SEEN."

PEARL: BUT I DID HAVE
TWO NICE LOOKIN' FELLERS

KIND OF LOOK AT ME TONIGHT
AS I'S A WALKIN' IN OUT THERE.

THEY LOOKED OVER AT
ME AND LAUGHED OUT LOUD.

[LAUGHTER]

SEE, I CAN'T HELP
THE WAY I LOOK.

WHEN THEY PASSED AROUND LOOKS,

I THOUGHT THEY SAID "BOOKS,"

AND I SAID,
"GIVE ME A FUNNY ONE."

[LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE]

ERNIE FORD: I'M ALWAYS
SURPRISED THAT, TO ME,

THAT SOME FELLA DOESN'T
JUST UP AND STEAL YOU AWAY.

PEARL: WELL, IF HE'S
WILLING, HE DON'T
HAVE TO STEAL.

[LAUGHTER]

I'VE GOT A "WELCOME"
SIGN ON THE MAT,

THE DOOR'S OPEN,
AND THE GOODIES
ARE ON THE TABLE.

FORD: WELL.

[LAUGHTER]

NARRATOR: THE AUDIENCE
ATE IT UP.

THAT FIRST PERFORMANCE
GENERATED HUNDREDS OF PIECES

OF FAN MAIL FROM PEOPLE,

SHE SAID, WHO "REALLY
FELT THEY KNEW ME,

AND THEY CONSIDERED
ME A FRIEND."

SARAH OPHELIA COLLEY ANSWERED
THEM ALL AS MINNIE PEARL.

PEARL: HOWDY!

AUDIENCE: HOWDY!

AUTRY: "I'M BACK
IN THE SADDLE AGAIN "

" OUT WHERE A FRIEND
IS A FRIEND... "

NARRATOR: BY 1940, GENE AUTRY
HAD LONG SINCE SETTLED

HIS DISPUTE WITH
REPUBLIC PICTURES

AND TRIUMPHANTLY RETURNED
TO THE SILVER SCREEN,

QUICKLY ECLIPSING ALL
THE OTHER SINGING COWBOYS,

INCLUDING HIS REPLACEMENT,
ROY ROGERS.

AUTRY: " WHERE YOU SLEEP
OUT EVERY NIGHT... "

NARRATOR: HE WAS RECEIVING
20,000 FAN LETTERS A WEEK.

MERCHANDISERS PAID HIM
HANDSOMELY TO PUT HIS NAME

ON CAP PISTOLS, COWBOY
BOOTS, LUNCH BOXES,
AND BICYCLES.

THAT YEAR, WITH THE DEPRESSION
STUBBORNLY HANGING ON,

HE EARNED \$205,000.

FOR AN APPEARANCE AT
MADISON SQUARE GARDEN,

AUTRY PAID THE AIRLINE
TWA \$3,400

TO FLY HIS HORSE CHAMPION
ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

THEY RIPPED OUT PASSENGER SEATS
AND PUT IN A HORSE STALL.

DURING A TOUR OF
THE BRITISH ISLES,

HE RODE CHAMPION INTO
LONDON'S SWANK SAVOY HOTEL.

AND IN DUBLIN,

300,000 PEOPLE TURNED
OUT TO GREET THEM.

AUTRY: "I GO MY WAY

" BACK IN THE SADDLE AGAIN

NARRATOR: BUT ONE OF
HIS BIGGEST THRILLS

OCCURRED BACK HOME
IN OKLAHOMA...

MAN: WHAT DO YOU SAY,
GANG, WE GIVE A NICE CHEER

FOR GENE AUTRY!
COME ON!

NARRATOR: WITH THE STATE'S
GOVERNOR ACTING AS EMCEE

AND SOME 35,000 PEOPLE
OVERWHELMING THE
TINY TOWN OF 227,

HIS RADIO SHOW,
"THE MELODY RANCH,"

WAS BROADCAST LIVE
FROM BERWYN,

AS IT OFFICIALLY CHANGED ITS
NAME TO GENE AUTRY, OKLAHOMA.

MAN: ...MAKING THIS ONE DAY
LONG TO BE REMEMBERED
IN OKLAHOMA.

NARRATOR: IN THE FALL
OF 1940,

THE AMERICAN SOCIETY
OF COMPOSERS, AUTHORS,
AND PUBLISHERS, ASCAP,

THE ORGANIZATION RESPONSIBLE
FOR COLLECTING ROYALTIES

FOR MUSIC PLAYED
ON THE RADIO,

SUDDENLY ANNOUNCED IT
WAS DOUBLING THE RATE

IT CHARGED RADIO STATIONS
ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

IT WAS A DIRECT THREAT
TO THE PROFITS OF WSM

AND EVERY OTHER
BROADCASTER,

SO THEY CREATED
THEIR OWN COMPETING GROUP,

BROADCAST MUSIC
INCORPORATED--BMI.

RALPH PEER, THE MAN WHO
HAD HELPED POPULARIZE

RACE AND HILLBILLY MUSIC,

SAW AN OPPORTUNITY
TO GIVE THAT MUSIC
EVEN GREATER EXPOSURE.

ASCAP, LONG DOMINATED BY
TIN PAN ALLEY SONGWRITERS
AND PUBLISHERS,

HAD OFTEN DISCRIMINATED AGAINST
OLD-TIME AND BLACK MUSIC.

RALPH PEER NOW
GAVE BMI A BOOST

BY ASSIGNING TO IT
HIS EXISTING CATALOG

OF BLUES, LATIN,
AND HILLBILLY SONGS,

INCLUDING THE MUSIC OF JIMMIE
RODGERS AND THE CARTER FAMILY.

OTHER SMALL PUBLISHERS
AND OTHER WRITERS

ASCAP HAD SHUNNED
FOLLOWED SUIT.

ON JANUARY 1, 1941,

THE BROADCASTERS DECLARED
A BAN ON ALL ASCAP SONGS

BEING PLAYED
OVER THEIR AIRWAVES

AND SWITCHED TO BMI.

[RAGTIME MUSIC PLAYING]

SUDDENLY, EVEN MORE
AMERICANS BEGAN HEARING

HILLBILLY MUSIC
ON THEIR RADIOS.

DAVIS: "THE OTHER NIGHT,
DEAR "

" AS I LAY SLEEPING

" I DREAMED I HELD YOU
IN MY ARMS... "

NARRATOR: BMI'S BIGGEST HIT
WAS "YOU ARE MY SUNSHINE"

BY A SINGER
NAMED JIMMIE DAVIS

WHO WOULD RIDE ITS
POPULARITY ALL THE WAY

TO THE GOVERNORSHIP
OF LOUISIANA.

DAVIS: " YOU ARE MY SUNSHINE,
MY ONLY SUNSHINE... "

NARRATOR:
WITHIN 10 MONTHS,

ASCAP REACHED A TRUCE
WITH THE BROADCASTERS.

BUT BMI HAD ALREADY
FIRMLY ESTABLISHED ITSELF

WITH MORE THAN 36,000
COPYRIGHTS FROM 52 PUBLISHERS.

A YEAR LATER, ROY ACUFF
LAUNCHED A MUSIC
PUBLISHING BUSINESS

IN NASHVILLE WITH FRED ROSE,
A SKILLED SONGWRITER.

THE NEW COMPANY WAS SOON
DELIVERING HITS,

PERFORMED BY ACUFF,
BOB WILLIS, AND MANY OTHERS.

NASHVILLE'S IMPORTANCE
IN THE BUSINESS

OF AMERICAN MUSIC
WAS GROWING.

STUART: EVERYBODY HAD
POCKETS OF COUNTRY MUSIC.

WLS IN CHICAGO,

WNOX, KNOXVILLE HAD
THE MID-DAY MERRY-GO-ROUND.

BIG D JAMBOREE IN DALLAS.

BUT NASHVILLE--
FIRST AND FOREMOST,

NASHVILLE WAS CENTRALLY LOCATED
IN THE UNITED STATES

IF YOU WERE
A TOURING MUSICIAN.

AND THEY HAD THAT 50,000 WATT
BEAM THAT CAME OFF OF WSM.

THE OTHER THING THAT I THINK
NASHVILLE SHOULD NEVER BE

OVERLOOKED FOR IS IT HAD
ITS BUSINESS ACT TOGETHER.

IT WAS THE INDUSTRY AND

THE BUSINESS END OF NASHVILLE

THAT KEPT IT IN THE GAME
AND WILL ALWAYS KEEP
IT IN THE GAME.

HAYS: HERE'S DEFORD BAILEY
WITH THE "FOX CHASE."

NARRATOR: ONE CASUALTY
OF THE BROADCASTING WAR
WAS DEFORD BAILEY,

WHO HAD BEEN WITH
THE GRAND OLE OPRY
FROM THE BEGINNING.

[PLAYING HARMONICA]

DURING THE 1941 BOYCOTT,

THE OPRY FIRED BAILEY
WITHOUT ANY PUBLIC EXPLANATION.

JUDGE HAY WOULD LATER
SAY IT WAS BECAUSE

BAILEY WOULDN'T
LEARN ANY NON-ASCAP SONGS.

"LIKE SOME MEMBERS
OF HIS RACE," HAY WROTE,

"DEFORD WAS LAZY."

MARSALIS: HE COULD PLAY.
DEFORD COULD PLAY.

THE GENE POOL CRIES
OUT FOR DIVERSITY.

TRIBAL TRADITION
CRIES OUT FOR SAMENESS.

AMERICA, WE'RE CAUGHT
IN BETWEEN THOSE TWO THINGS.

SO, OUR MUSIC HAS ENDED
UP BEING SEGREGATED.

AND THAT'S NOT WHAT
THE ORIGINS OF THE MUSIC

WOULD LEAD YOU TO BELIEVE
WOULD BE ITS TRAJECTORY.

[PLAYING HARMONICA]

NARRATOR: BAILEY WAS
42 YEARS OLD

WITH A WIFE AND
3 YOUNG CHILDREN

WHEN THE OPRY UNCEREMONIOUSLY
DROPPED HIM.

"THEY TURNED ME LOOSE," HE
SAID, "TO ROOT HOG OR DIE.

THEY DIDN'T GIVE A HOOT
WHICH WAY I WENT."

HE SET UP A SUCCESSFUL
SHOESHINE PARLOR IN HIS HOUSE

AND THEN EXPANDED IT TO
A THRIVING STORE FRONT
IN DOWNTOWN NASHVILLE.

YEAH!

[PLAYING HARMONICA]

[APPLAUSE]

NARRATOR: IN 1965,

ON THE 40th ANNIVERSARY
OF THE GRAND OLE OPRY,

DEFORD BAILEY WAS FINALLY
INVITED BACK TO ITS STAGE.

MAN: AND NOW
HERE'S THE BALANCE
OF THE CARTER FAMILY,

OR MOST OF THE BALANCE,

AND THEY GOT A NUMBER
FOR YOU.

WHAT'S IT GONNA BE?

GIRLS: "IN THE HIGHWAYS."

"IN THE HIGHWAYS."

GIRLS: "IN THE HIGHWAYS,
IN THE HEDGES"

NARRATOR:
BY THE SPRING OF 1941,

A.P. AND SARA CARTER HAD BEEN
DIVORCED FOR TWO YEARS.

THE PUBLIC WAS UNAWARE
OF THE SPLIT,

AND THE CARTER FAMILY WAS
MORE POPULAR THAN EVER.

THE GROUP NOW INCLUDED
MAYBELLE'S 3 YOUNG GIRLS,

HELEN, JUNE, AND ANITA,

WHO PERFORMED REGULARLY
ON THE SHOW.

â

CARTER FAMILY:
â WHY DO YOU CRY,
LITTLE DARLING? â

â WHY ARE THOSE TEARS
IN YOUR EYES?... â

NARRATOR: IN OCTOBER 1941,
RCA VICTOR BROUGHT THE CARTERS

TO NEW YORK CITY FOR
ANOTHER STUDIO SESSION.

AMONG THE SONGS THEY RECORDED
WAS ONE WRITTEN BY MAYBELLE,

"WHY DO YOU CRY,
LITTLE DARLING..."

CARTER FAMILY:
â TO SEE YOU FEEL SO BLUE...

NARRATOR:
A PLAINTIVE SONG
ABOUT A GIRL

PINING FOR HER SWEETHEART
WHO HAS BEEN CALLED
AWAY INTO THE ARMY.

WITH WAR ALREADY
ENGULFING EUROPE AND ASIA,

THE NATION'S FIRST PEACETIME
DRAFT HAD BEEN INSTITUTED

IN THE UNITED STATES.

MAYBELLE'S SONG
CAPTURED THE WORRIES OF
MILLIONS OF AMERICANS

THAT THEY, TOO, WOULD BE
DRAWN INTO THE CONFLICT.

IN NOVEMBER, "LIFE" MAGAZINE
WAS PREPARING A COVER STORY

ABOUT THE INCREASING
POPULARITY OF HILLBILLY MUSIC

AND PLANNED TO FOCUS
ON THE CARTER FAMILY
AS THE PRIME EXAMPLE.

THEY ALL GATHERED
IN POOR VALLEY
FOR THE SHOOT.

CARTER FAMILY:
"THAT'S WHY I CRY,
LITTLE DARLING"

"BECAUSE YOU'RE GOING AWAY

"LEAVING ME ALL
BROKEN HEARTED"

"TO WAIT FOR YOU
DAY AFTER DAY..."

NARRATOR:
JUNE CARTER, AGE 12,

WAS SO EXCITED SHE SAVED
ALL THE BURNED FLASH BULBS

AS SOUVENIRS OF THE EVENT

THAT WAS SURE TO MAKE
THEM EVEN MORE FAMOUS.

BUT THE STORY NEVER RAN.

"LIFE" MAGAZINE
PULLED THE COVER STORY
AT THE LAST MOMENT

TO MAKE ROOM
FOR BIGGER NEWS.

[GUNFIRE]

[INDISTINCT ANNOUNCEMENTS]

REPORTER: WE TAKE YOU
TO THE SPEAKER'S PLATFORM.

MAN: PRESENTING
THE PRESIDENT OF
THE UNITED STATES.

ROOSEVELT: DECEMBER 7, 1941,

A DATE WHICH WILL LIVE
IN INFAMY,

THE UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA WAS SUDDENLY

AND DELIBERATELY ATTACKED

BY NAVAL AND AIR FORCES

OF THE EMPIRE OF JAPAN.

THE UNITED STATES WAS AT
PEACE WITH THAT NATION...

NARRATOR: AS THE NATION
MOBILIZED ITS YOUNG MEN
TO ENTER WORLD WAR II,

MAYBELLE'S SONG NOW HELD
EVEN GREATER MEANING.

CARTER FAMILY: "EVERY NIGHT
I'LL KNEEL BY MY BEDSIDE

AND ASK GOD TO GUIDE
YOU EACH DAY

BACK TO YOUR SWEETHEART
THAT'S WAITING

AND LOVES YOU MORE
THAN I CAN SAY

"

NARRATOR: THE DAY AFTER
PEARL HARBOR,

TOMMY DUNCAN WALKED
INTO RADIO STATION KVOO

TO TELL BOB WILLS
AND THE OTHER TEXAS PLAYBOYS,

"I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU GUYS,
BUT I'M GOING TO JOIN

THIS MAN'S ARMY AND FIGHT
THOSE SONS OF BITCHES."

WILLS: "A ...A SAD DAY COMING

" FOR THE FOES
OF ALL MANKIND "

" THEY MUST ANSWER
TO THE PEOPLE "

" AND IT'S TROUBLING
THEIR MINDS "

" EVERYBODY WHO MUST
FEAR THEM... "

NARRATOR: WILLS, AGE 36,
DECIDED HE WOULD ENLIST, TOO,

AS DID HIS STEEL GUITAR PLAYER
LEON McAULIFFE.

WILLS: " THERE'LL BE SMOKE
ON THE WATER ON THE LAND "

" AND SEA

" WHEN OUR ARMY...

NARRATOR: IN CHICAGO,
NEARLY 50 MEMBERS

OF THE NATIONAL BARN DANCE
JOINED THE SERVICE.

ANNOUNCER: GENE,
WE'VE BEEN HEARING SO MUCH
ABOUT YOUR ENLISTING.

WHEN IS THIS ALL
GOING TO TAKE PLACE?

AUTRY: BELIEVE IT
OR NOT,

BUT IT'S GOING TO
TAKE PLACE RIGHT NOW.

NARRATOR: GENE AUTRY WAS SWORN
INTO THE ARMY AIR CORPS

DURING A LIVE BROADCAST
OF MELODY RANCH.

AUTRY: I DO.

HIS INCOME HAD RISEN
TO \$600,000 IN 1941.

HE TRADED THAT IN FOR
A SERGEANT'S SALARY.

AUTRY ENDED UP CO-PILOTING
A C-109 CARGO PLANE

ON THE DANGEROUS FLIGHTS
OVER THE HIMALAYAS
FROM INDIA TO CHINA.

VIRTUALLY EVERY STAR NOW
ADDED SONGS REFLECTING

THE EXPERIENCES
AND EMOTIONS OF THE WAR.

"SMOKE ON THE WATER,"
RELEASED BY BOB WILLIS

AND OTHER ARTISTS,
PROMISED REVENGE AGAINST
AMERICA'S ENEMIES.

PATSY MONTANA DID
"I'LL WAIT FOR YOU,"

OFFERING A YOUNG WOMAN'S
PROMISE TO HER BOYFRIEND,

WHILE AUTRY HAD A HIT
WITH "AT MAIL CALL TODAY,"

ABOUT A SERVICEMAN OVERSEAS
RECEIVING A DEAR JOHN LETTER.

AND ELTON BRITT'S
"THERE'S A STAR-SPANGLED
BANNER WAVING SOMEWHERE"

TOLD THE STORY OF A
DISABLED, BACKWOODS BOY

WHO NEVERTHELESS YEARNES
TO FIGHT FOR HIS COUNTRY.

I THINK A LOT OF
SERVICEMEN FROM THE
NORTH AND FROM THE WEST

WERE INTRODUCED TO COUNTRY
MUSIC FOR THE FIRST TIME.

THEY HEARD THEIR BUDDIES FROM

THE SOUTH SINGING THE MUSIC

IN THE BARRACKS
AND ON THE TROOP SHIPS
AND THAT SORT OF THING.

NARRATOR: AFTER THE ARMED
FORCES RADIO SERVICE

ADDED THE GRAND OLE OPRY
TO ITS REGULAR ROTATION
OF BROADCASTS,

ONE POLL IT CONDUCTED
FOUND ROY ACUFF

TO BE MORE POPULAR
THAN FRANK SINATRA.

IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC, WAR
CORRESPONDENT ERNIE PYLE

REPORTED THAT
DURING ATTACKS,

JAPANESE SOLDIERS
SOMETIMES SHOUTED,

"TO HELL WITH ROOSEVELT!
TO HELL WITH BABE RUTH!

TO HELL WITH ROY ACUFF!"

HILLBILLY MUSIC WAS ADVANCING
ON THE HOME FRONT, TOO,

WHERE THE WAR EFFORT HAD
ENDED THE DEPRESSION.

600 RADIO STATIONS
NOW FEATURED THE MUSIC
COAST TO COAST.

MALONE: PEOPLE WERE
LEAVING THE FARM,

LEAVING RURAL LIFE, MOVING
INTO TOWN, GETTING NEW JOBS.

A LOT OF PEOPLE MOVING
INTO DEFENSE WORK.

SO MUSIC MOVED AS
THE PEOPLE MOVED.

BRITT: â€”a AND A HERO BRAVE
IS WHAT I WANT TO BE... â€”a

WORLD WAR II NATIONALIZED
COUNTRY MUSIC.

NARRATOR: UNDER THE HEADLINE
"BULL MARKET IN CORN,"

"TIME" MAGAZINE PROCLAIMED,

"THE DOMINANT POPULAR MUSIC OF
THE U.S. TODAY IS HILLBILLY."

BRITT: â€œ IN THIS WAR
WITH ITS MAD SCHEMES â€œ

â€œ OF DESTRUCTION

â€œ OF OUR COUNTRY FAIR
AND OUR SWEET LIBERTY â€œ

â€œ BY THE MAD DICTATORS
LEADERS OF CORRUPTION â€œ

â€œ CAN'T THE U.S. USE
A MOUNTAIN BOY LIKE ME? â€œ

â€œ GOD GAVE ME THE RIGHT
TO BE A FREE AMERICAN â€œ

â€œ FOR THAT PRECIOUS
RIGHT I'D GLADLY DIE â€œ

â€œ THERE'S A STAR-SPANGLED
BANNER WAVING SOMEWHERE â€œ

â€œ THAT IS WHERE I WANT
TO LIVE WHEN I DIE â€œ

â€œ

NARRATOR:
AFTER THE WAR ENDED,

GENE AUTRY RETURNED
TO CIVILIAN LIFE

AND STARTED
MAKING MOVIES AGAIN.

BUT THINGS HAD CHANGED.

MAN: WELL, THE SINGING
COWBOY ERA, LIKE ALL ERAS,

LIKE ALL FADS,
LIKE ALL TRENDS,

HAS AN ARC
AND COMES TO AN END.

AND I THINK WORLD WAR II
SORT OF ACCELERATED THAT.

THE ESCAPISM WASN'T
QUITE THERE ANYMORE.

NARRATOR: AUTRY BEGAN
DIVERSIFYING,

STEADILY BUILDING
A BUSINESS EMPIRE

THAT WOULD INCLUDE RADIO
AND TELEVISION STATIONS,

REAL ESTATE, AND
A PUBLISHING COMPANY THAT
INCREASED HIS PROFITS

FROM NEW SONGS LIKE
"HERE COMES SANTA CLAUS."

"WORKING WITH NUMBERS WAS WHAT
I DID BEST," HE SAID LATER.

"WHAT I DID LESS WELL WAS SING,
ACT, AND PLAY GUITAR."

ULTIMATELY, HE WOULD OWN
A MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL TEAM,

AND BY THE TIME
HE DIED IN 1998,

HE WOULD BE ONE OF THE 400
RICHEST PEOPLE IN AMERICA,

AND THE ONLY ENTERTAINER
ON THE LIST.

BOB WILLS' TIME IN
THE SERVICE HAD BEEN BRIEF.

THE ARMY DISCHARGED HIM
IN 1943.

HE WAS OLDER THAN
MOST SOLDIERS,

AND HIS DRINKING HAD
LED TO DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS.

HE HEADED OUT TO CALIFORNIA,
WHERE HIS SHOWS

OUT-SOLD THOSE OF
TOMMY DORSEY AND BENNY GOODMAN.

DURING THE LAST
YEARS OF THE WAR,
HE WAS BIGGER THAN EVER.

HAGGARD: GOT ON 10,
11 YEARS OLD.

AND I HEARD ON THE RADIO
THAT HE WAS GOING TO BE

AT A PLACE CALLED
BEARDSLEY BALLROOM.

AND I KNEW WHERE IT WAS.

AND I WAITED TILL MAMA
GOT IN BED AND GIVE HER
TIME TO GO TO SLEEP,

BUT I GOT ON MY BICYCLE
AND RODE OVER,

ABOUT--IT MUST HAVE BEEN
ABOUT 5 MILES.

FIRST THING I SEEN
WAS A SAILOR CART-WHEELING
OUT OF THAT...

SOMEBODY HAD KNOCKED
THIS SAILOR'S--

THIS IS BACK WHEN--
BEFORE DRIVE-BY SHOOTINGS
AND ALL THAT,

YOU KNOW, AND THEY
USED TO HAVE SOME
REALLY GOOD BRAWLS

AT THEM COUNTRY DANCES
AND NOBODY THOUGHT
ANYTHING ABOUT IT.

I WENT AROUND BACK OF
THE OLD DANCE HALL,

AND I STOOD ON MY BICYCLE SEAT
AND I COULD SEE IN THERE.

AND I COULD SEE BOB.
I SEEN THEM ALL ONSTAGE.

TOMMY WAS SINGING.

BOB HAD HIS FIDDLE.

AND THEY ALL HAD ON
WHITE SHIRTS, COWBOY HAT,

AND BOOTS WERE SHINED,

AND THEY HAD THESE
G.I. HAIRCUTS.

DRESSED FIT TO KILL.

THEY WERE SHARP
ON THE STAGE.

IT WAS...AN INTRIGUING
MOMENT FOR ME.

IT DIDN'T LAST VERY LONG.

I GOT DOWN OFF MY BIKE
AND WENT HOME AND WENT TO BED

BEFORE MAMA KNEW
I WAS GONE.

NARRATOR: DURING THE WAR,

SARA CARTER DECIDED SHE HAD
HAD ENOUGH OF PERFORMING.

SHE YEARNED FOR A STABLE,
DOMESTIC LIFE

WITH HER HUSBAND COY BAYS,

WHO HAD A STEADY JOB
IN CALIFORNIA.

CARTER FAMILY: "I'VE BEEN AWAY,
BABE, A LONG, LONG TIME..."

NARRATOR: WITHOUT MAKING
ANY FORMAL ANNOUNCEMENT,

THE ORIGINAL CARTER FAMILY
QUIETLY DISBANDED.

CARTER FAMILY: "TO EASE THIS
LONESOME, BLUE HEART OF MINE"

NARRATOR: BUT MAYBELLE
AND HER 3 GIRLS STILL
WANTED A CAREER IN MUSIC.

MAN: AND NOW HERE'S
THE 3 CARTER SISTERS--
ELLEN, JUNE, AND ANITA,

AND THEY GOT
A NUMBER FOR YOU.

GIRL: KEEP MOVING ON!

NARRATOR: BILLED AS THE CARTER
SISTERS AND MOTHER MAYBELLE,

THEY LANDED A JOB
SINGING ON A SMALL RICHMOND,
VIRGINIA STATION

AND PERFORMED
DURING THE WEEK

AT COUNTY COURTHOUSES,
SCHOOL GYMNASIUMS,

EVEN ON THE TOP OF CONCESSION
STANDS AT DRIVE-IN THEATRES.

TIMES WERE CHANGING.

RADIO STATIONS WERE STARTING
TO PLAY RECORDS OVER THE AIR,

RATHER THAN USING
ONLY LIVE PERFORMANCES,

AND TELEVISION WAS
COMING ONTO THE SCENE.

BUT LIKE SO MANY OTHER
COUNTRY ARTISTS,

THE CARTER SISTERS
AND THEIR MOTHER

BEGAN TO DREAM OF
GOING TO NASHVILLE

AND SOMEDAY PERFORMING
ON THE STAGE

OF THE RYMAN AUDITORIUM
WITH THE GRAND OLE OPRY,

SOMETHING THE ORIGINAL CARTER
FAMILY HAD NEVER DONE.

CARTER SISTERS: ♪ ON

MALONE: I THINK UNTIL

THE END OF THE 1930s,

THE GRAND OLE OPRY WAS JUST
ONE OF SEVERAL BARN DANCES.

THE WORLD WAR II PERIOD
WAS A TIME

WHEN THE GRAND OLE OPRY BEGAN
TO SURGE INTO PROMINENCE

AND GRADUALLY
BEGAN TO LEAVE

THE OTHER BARN DANCES
BEHIND COMMERCIALLY.

NARRATOR: WITH THE WAR OVER,

NEW STARS WERE ALREADY
RISING ON THE RYMAN'S STAGE...

AND IN THE LATE 1940s
AND 1950s,

THEY WOULD CEMENT
THE OPRY'S PLACE

AS THE PRE-EMINENT
VENUE IN COUNTRY MUSIC,

WHERE ITS ARTISTS WOULD
CONTINUE TO PUSH THE MUSIC

IN EVERY DIRECTION.

WILLS: "OH, I'M THINKING
TONIGHT OF MY BLUE EYES"

MAN: "AHH!

"WHO IS SAILING
ALL OVER THE SEA"

"YES

"AND I'M THINKING TONIGHT
OF HER ONLY"

"AND I WONDER IF SHE
EVER THINKS OF ME"

OH, YOU KNOW SHE DOES.

"COULD HAVE BEEN BETTER
FOR US BOTH HAD WE NEVER"

â€” IN THIS WIDE, WICKED
WORLD HAD NEVER MET â€”

â€” FOR THE PLEASURE
WE BOTH SEEM TO GET â€”

â€” I'M SURE I WILL
NEVER FORGET â€”

ALL RIGHT!

OW-HA!

YEAH.

NARRATOR: NEXT TIME
ON "COUNTRY MUSIC,"

THE BIRTH OF BLUEGRASS...

RICKY SKAGGS: I MEAN,
HOW MANY PEOPLE CAN SAY,

"THIS MAN RIGHT HERE STARTED
A WHOLE NEW GENRE OF MUSIC"?

BILL MONROE DID THAT.

MONROE: â€” HEY, HEY,
GOOD-LOOKIN' â€”

NARRATOR: AND THE LIFE OF
THE HILLBILLY SHAKESPEARE,
HANK WILLIAMS.

MARTY STUART: SONGS
ARE THE MAGIC CARPETS
THAT CHANGE THINGS.

THE WORLD CHANGED BECAUSE
OF HANK WILLIAMS' SONGS.

NARRATOR: WHEN "COUNTRY MUSIC"
CONTINUES.

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OF COUNTRY MUSIC,

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â FOR THE PLEASURE
WE BOTH SEEM TO GET â

â I'M SURE I WILL
NEVER FORGET â

â NOW, YOU TOLD ME ONCE,
DEAR, THAT YOU LOVED ME â

â AND YOU SAID THAT
WE NEVER WOULD PART â

â BUT A LINK IN THE CHAIN
HAS BEEN BROKEN â

â LEAVING ME WITH A SAD
AND ACHING HEART â

â OH, I'M THINKING TONIGHT
OF MY BLUE EYES â

â WHO IS SAILING FOR
ALL OF THE SEA â

â AND I'M THINKING
TONIGHT OF HER ONLY â

â AND I WONDER IF SHE
EVER THINKS OF ME â